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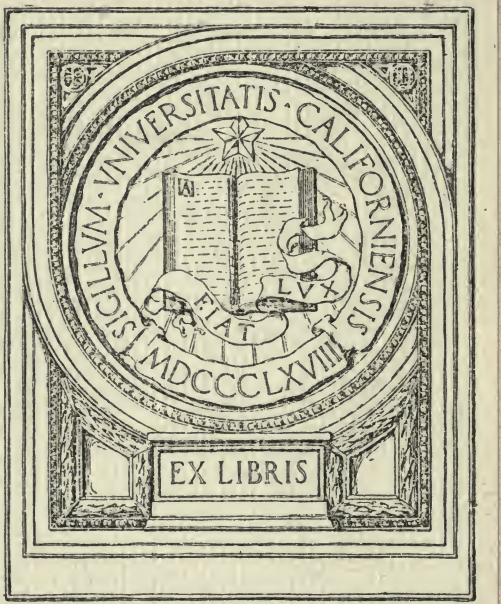
MIRAGE

POEMS

DOUGLAS AINSLIE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MIRAGE

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POEMS

BY

DOUGLAS AINSLIE

LONDON
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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO MY MOTHER

FANNY AINSLIE

AND TO HER MOTHER,

OF FRAGRANT MEMORY,

MARY MORGAN,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

THE majority of the poems comprising this volume had been written before I had a definite conception of the true nature of art. This, of course, can in no way affect their value, and I only mention it with the intention of leading up to another matter which I consider to be of real importance to everyone who has attained to years of discretion. These years are in many ways less delightful than those spent in the perpetual wonderland of youth. But in others they are greatly more interesting.

When I was at Eton, and even later, in Oxford days, we used to look upon poetry and the other arts as things altogether divorced from one another. We went further, and I remember maintaining in more than one debating society at the University that prose and poetry were irrevocably divided by the rubicon of rhyme and metre. When I published *Escarlamonde* in 1890, we were still disdainfully talking of *hommes de prose et de crime,* for we were great students of the Romantic French poets and

prone to accept as truth anything that came out of the mouth of Théophile Gautier, and to some extent of Victor Hugo, though we considered the latter to be somewhat tarnished by reason of his descending from Parnassian slopes to the level of politics !

As regards æsthetic theory, we were content in those days with a few phrases from Keats and Poe, a happy thought or two from Shelley's essay on poetry, and a few tags of studio talk from D. G. Rossetti. That solemn commonplace about fundamental brain-work being at the base of all art is, I observe, still aired by some writers, when they have no very clear idea as to what they ought to think of a given work.

But many people seem to me to be still in the early eighties as regards the nature of the poet and of his art. Quite recently I was discussing a volume of verse with the editor of one of the leading monthly journals, having reputation for literature. He was urging that the writer of the book in question must be an original genius, and the reasons he alleged for this belief were so original that they remain engraven on my memory : " He's the untidiest beggar you ever saw ; he sleeps on a bench in the Park in summer, never brushes his hair or his clothes, lives altogether in Public-

houses, and nothing would induce him to enter a drawing-room." He really seemed to believe that the verse of the youth in question was really the better for being soused in ale before being served up for public consumption. It was in vain that I strove to make clear that although of interest to a possible future biographer, it did not induce me to believe him to be a genius : my conviction of that must depend on his work. He remained rooted in his belief that the youth's talent, in some mysterious way that he was unable to explain, had its origin in the consumption of alcohol in low haunts. I inquired had he ever read Vico, or Schleiermacher, or Schiller on the subject of Æsthetic ? He admitted with some asperity that he had not done so, as though the subject were hardly proper, and when I ventured to point out that it had exercised the minds of the very greatest thinkers from Plato and Aristotle to our own day, he replied that all the same he had made up his "mind" as to the nature of poetry and of art, and he did not intend to alter it for anyone !

I have mentioned this instance of arrogant insular ignorance in order that others may be warned against holding themselves up to the ridicule of the civilised world. There seems

to be no doubt that the fact of Great Britain being an island does encourage a certain narrowness of view and a retention of positions long since abandoned by scientific thinkers. Herbert Spencer's remarks upon the nature of art are another example of this, and the criticism upon them when they were known on the continent was that they would have done credit to a writer of the beginning of the eighteenth century, but were about one hundred and sixty years out of date.

In our own time immense progress has been made in æsthetic theory, and Benedetto Croce has put the final touches to the theories of Vico which have for so long remained unknown to the greater portion of thinkers not directly in touch with Italian thought. But Croce has done more than this : he has given us a complete philosophical system [1] containing the true theory and solution of the æsthetic problem. I have translated the volume containing it into English. There the reader will find the difficult problems connected with art attacked by a trained philosophical intellect, and he will very soon see how

[1] Croce's complete system is contained in three volumes : "Æsthetic," "Practical Activity," and "Logic." Laterza of Bari is the publisher of all three volumes, which of course are in Italian.

worthless are the happy thoughts of the studio or of the poet's desk, when the problem of the nature of art, in all its complexity, comes to be dealt with.

I shall here paraphrase a few sentences from Croce's criticism of Carducci taken from his journal *La Critica,* by far the most valuable publication on philosophy and literature that exists in Italy.

I believe they will enable the reader to see the importance of the new theories.

The human spirit is at once one and complex; those forces which we call poetical, intellective, passionate and practical, are all of them active at every moment of our lives, all in one, although one is distinguished from the other. From this distinction arises opposition and strife, and from the strife come development and spiritual productivity. Therefore there is no such thing as a poet who is simply a poet, as there is no such thing as a practical man who is nothing more than that. We call those men poets and practical men, in the eminent sense, whose soul is so arranged and disposed that poetry, or action, as the case may be, constitute the principal end of the individual in question, to which end all the others are subordinate or conspire. But if a poet were

not also a practical man and a man with passions, that is to say, if he were not a man, he would not be a poet ; and if a man of action had nothing of the imagination of the poet, he would not be a man of action.

The material of poetry is action or the desire for action ; the material of action is that which is poetically desired and intellectively thought.

Critically to understand a poet, then, is to understand his soul-struggle, his practical and emotional powers, not less than his contemplative and poetical powers. All of these are active within him, and it must be seen how from the struggle between these powers, his poetry is now helped, now impeded. For the non-poetical powers of his soul now give themselves as nourishment to the poetical, now devour and are in turn nourished by them. This general æsthetic and philosophic truth is often neglected, and instead of looking at the complicated process as a whole, certain particular aspects of it are selected and presented without method, the rough material of poetry being thus confused with poetry itself, and vice versa.

We know poets, who are also something of philosophers, others who never succeed in adapting themselves to reality, others who are per-

petually the prey of Eros and of his frenzies, others with whom dwells alongside the poet, a practical man, vigilant and active in practical matters, in fact, a man of business.

Now these theories, these losses of equilibrium, these anguishes and joys of love, this practicality, act now as conditions and aids to the work of art in the same individual, now as the cause of ugliness or failure. For it must be remembered that there are any number of ways of achieving ugliness or failure to express in art, but only one of achieving the beautiful. *Perfect* expression is a pleonasm; when a thing is expressed it cannot be more than expressed. Let us, therefore, not attempt to gild the lily of our speech.

I have said little as to the poems in this volume, but if they do not speak for themselves, they will not be worth listening to, and if they do, that will be unnecessary.

DOUGLAS AINSLIE.

ATHENÆUM CLUB, 1910.

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MIRAGE

CALYPSO

Once, as the legends tell us,
  Ulysses came again
Unto Calypso's islet
  Set in the azure main.
But now no roses riot,
  Where once the rose was king,
Nor aught of leaf nor blossom,
  Where dwelt eternal spring.
Only an ancient woman
  Stands by an altar bare
With springtime in her blue eyes,
  But snowflakes in her hair.
" Ah ! Knew you not, Ulysses,
  That the great gods above
Let not the nymphs immortal
  Taste of a mortal love ?
And when you loved me lightly,
  And sailed afar away,
To a thousand years of winter
  They changed my years of May ! "

Thus spake the nymph Calypso
Unto the Wanderer,
The love within her blue eyes,
The snowflakes in her hair.
No answer made Ulysses,
Though shame was in his face;
He kneeled him down beside her,
He held her hand a space.

. . . . . .

Behold, a change, a marvel,
Upon the isle is wrought!
The winter sudden vanished,
The springtide sudden brought.
Behold the hag Calypso
Is come a nymph one more!
Over her slim white shoulders
The golden tresses pour;
Erect as Eros' arrow
She stands that stooped but now,
Fled are the claws of Chronos
From off her ivory brow.
He clasps her to his bosom,
And now he finds his speech,
Like waves of ocean amorous
That woo the coral beach.
On her doves' wings poised above them
The Paphian goddess smiles,

As with incense for thanksgiving
  Her altar high he piles.
Their worship duly rendered
  To the goddess of the brave,
Calypso and the Wanderer
  Seek out Calypso's cave.
Beneath the ferny curtain
  At eve they disappear ;
What haps within I know not,
  But the Paphian hovers near.
When now Aurora's fingers
  Make blush the mountain's cone,
Behold the King Ulysses
  Come from the cave alone.
His sword is in its scabbard
  And on his head his crown :
Now what can ail Ulysses
  That he paceth up and down ?
But hark ! he calls the goddess
  Unseen of him, who stands
With the quiver and the arrows
  Of her archer in his hands.
Her archer laughs beside her
  As a golden shaft he speeds,
And when outspeaks Ulysses,
  Methinks his heart it bleeds.
" O goddess, tell me whither
  Hath fled the nymph I love ?

This very night I clasped her,
All joys of earth above.
Then to our couch came Morpheus
And at his side the Dreams,
Awhile they ruled my senses,
But when I woke meseems
I heard the voice of Echo,
Who mocked me where I lay,
Crying, ' O King Ulysses,
Thy nymph hath fled away.'
I turned me to Calypso
Where at my side she slept,
Craved of each nook and crevice,
If they her secret kept.
But she was flown : O Goddess,
I pray thee, Goddess mine,
Give me again Calypso,
And store of oil and wine,
And doves upon thine altar
I swear devout to vow,
If again I clasp Calypso
That fled away but now."
Answered the Paphian goddess :
" O King of many a wile,
It pleased me to see thee sailing
Again to Calypso's isle ;
For I knew gray-eyed Athenè
(Whom overmuch men praise)

Willed not thy wanton voyage
And baulked thee many days ;
And in my heart was pity
When I saw thy head forlorn
Bowed o'er the hag Calypso
Who hath known Olympus' scorn.
Therefore I gave her springtide
Back to the nymph once more,
Therefore with bloom of springtide
I decked again her shore,
Therefore I led thy footsteps
Beneath the fringèd cave,
And by my will Calypso
The bliss thou knewest gave.
But hearken now, Ulysses ;
Thou seekest her in vain,
Never around Calypso
Shall come thine arms again.
Far beyond earthly sorrow
I have fixed her in the skies,
Where if thou look, Ulysses,
Thou shalt see her starry eyes.
Thee she loved well, Ulysses,
But thou, O Wanderer,
(Not overmuch I blame thee,)
Slight was thy love for her.
Now to thy ship, Ulysses,
Smite thou the hollow sea,

And for those last sweet kisses,
Do thou give thanks to me."
Thus spake the Paphian goddess
Unto Ulysses, King,
Then over blue Ægean
He saw her doves take wing.

THE CHINESE PLEASAUNCE

(A Poem in Red Lacquer)

To Senatore Benedetto Croce.

The speaker is Sse-ma-Kouang, who was first minister of the Chinese Empire toward the end of the eleventh century, A.D., under the dynasty of Sung. He is celebrated also as the historian of the Empire from 700 B.C., to 960 A.D., date of the accession of the Sung dynasty.

Let others build wide Palaces
For their vanities, vexations;
Not for me such fallacies,
Who am ruler of the nations.
I have built a House of Leisure,
House to lodge my friends and me;
In the midst the greatest treasure:
Dome-shaped, silent library.
Here five thousand books delight me
With the wisdom of the ages:
He shall rate his wisdom lightly
Who converseth with the sages.
Kung-fu-tzu,[1] translucent master!
His the teaching that doth guide me:

[1] Confucius.

Though my wits should travel faster,
Lao-tzé would aye outstride me ;
Teaching the mysterious Tao,
Which, the contraries inweaving,
Makes our weaknesses the way shew
To the mightiest achieving.
Standing on my roof of pleasure,
Ye shall see the ruby splendour,
Which the sun with royal measure
Hangs around the morning tender.
Now come sit in this pavilion,
We shall watch the waters gleam,
Lacquered golden and vermilion,
Where in five is split the stream,
Like a leopard's claw, and floating
On its waters ere they break,
See the white swans ever gloating
On the images they make.
Where the stream its tresses tosses,
As it revels in cascade,
Like an elephant's proboscis,
See that rocky balustrade,
Upward curving, and its summit
Bears an open house of summer ;
With the bee-loved roses' hum it
Ever welcomes the new-comer.
Mark the branch that westward bending
Makes an islet sand-besprinkled ;

Coloured shells, their beauty lending,
Deck its shores, adroitly mingled.
Half is planted with a forest
Ever verdant, half is graced
With a fisher's cottage modest:
Thatch and reed-work interlaced.
In that bush a feathery warbler
Waits until I touch my kin,[1]
Then declares melodious warfare,
Which by striving much I win.
Painted ducks and stealthy fishes,
Hither, thither, swim and glide,
Startled as the coney swishes
Through the rushes at their side.
Here, when weary of my reading,
Artfully I sometimes angle,
Easily the fish misleading,
Gold and silver scales entangle.
Then I ponder fishes' folly,
Which resembleth much the human,
Thinking with less melancholy
Upon man, the son of woman.
From the little forest's centre
Springs the Mount of Verdure; we shall
Reach its summit, peradventure,
By this path, like spiral sea-shell,

[1] A kind of Chinese violin.

Growing less, as toward the crest we
Climb—but even this is tiring—
Here be mossy banks to rest ye,
Whence the landscape is inspiring.
On the west are willows weeping,
Pointing down their avenue,
Toward the rockery, where creeping
Once their love the ivy grew.
See through meadow flower-enamelled,
Other streams are seeking, hiding,
Flying now and now entramelled,
Through the emerald grasses gliding,
Forming cup-like crystal holders;
Then they leave their level courses,
And against those rocky boulders
Dash they with united forces;
Dash and break in silver fury;
Thus their fortune they will squander;
Then in foamy [1] mourning through the
Lower meadow they must wander.
Shall we pass into my grotto,
Which grows wider as ye enter,
Till it form a dome sun-shot through?
Sun and honeysuckle blent there!
For the light can filter only
Through the trellis-work of branches

[1] Mourning is *white* in China.

Which defends this grotto lonely.
And its mystery enhances.
Here one gropes among the boulders
Scattered o'er the floor in masses,
Ere he plunge with head and shoulders
In the bath where water passes
From a tiny spring that issues
Through the grotto rocky-sided,
Flows in green and golden tissues
Wandering here and there, well-guided.
Coming forth, we walk the meadow,
And behold the streamlet narrows,
And its waters break as they flow
O'er the rocks, like silver arrows.
More pavilions to the north spring
In the little hills, like mothers
Rising proud above their offspring,
Rise they one above the others.
All with bamboo groves are shaded
And with pathways intersected :
Thus I ordered and they made it,
That no ray should be detected.
To the East a plain extended
Is in flowery beds divided,
Square and oval and defended—
From the north old cedars hide it.
All these flowery beds are teeming
With medicinal and scented

Flowers and herbs and spring is gleaming
Always in this space I lent it.
Every flower and every stem on
Dwells the Spring, the leaf-clad maiden,
Orange, pomegranate and lemon
Bow their branches, heavy laden.
If it please ye, we shall clamber
Upward by that rocky chain ;
Ye shall see Kiang, like amber,
Winding through the rice-grown plain.
There the sunset rays belate me,
While I watch the skimming swallows,
Or the hawk's manœuvres stately,
As the nimble mouse he follows.
In the hills on the horizon
Evening dies the death of roses ;
Thick the rosy carpet lies on
Vistas where the eye reposes.
Oft the moon has found me sitting,
Where the sun had left me yonder ;
Then through rustling tea-grove flitting,
By dim waters forth I wander.
In a reverie I harken
To the waters' gentle lapping,
Watch the moon steer straight her bark in
To the haven where is flapping
On my boat the Five-Clawed Dragon,
Broidered with Celestial Yellow,

The imperial silken flag on :
Not a subject hath his fellow.
This the Son of Heaven gave me
As I lately left the Presence,
Smiled and granted leave to wave the
Yellow Dragon o'er my Pleasaunce.
Hardly in the gloom ye notice
How the sky he would be climbing ;
Lo ! the moon herself his boat is :
See him in her arms reclining !
Sometimes friends will come to visit
Him they rightly count as their friend,
And the hours in pleasures licit
Pass we in pavilion curtained.
They will read me of their verses,
I shall read them verse I've written ;
Each one's muse in wine rehearses,
Ere with song his lips are smitten.
While at court men forge them fetters,
Seeking pleasure or intriguing,
Here we worship only letters,
Letters and a love worth seeking ;
Wisdom from whose radiant being
Light must pierce a thousand vapours,
Ere it come within my seeing,
Dim with dust of many labours.
Ah ! Could cloud and mist evanish,
Though it were by tempest furious ;

From my Pleasaunce I would banish
All but wisdom rare and curious.
Speak I thus that am a ruler,
Husband, citizen and father ?
Wisdom's self were but a fool ere
I should seek my pleasure rather
Than my duty ; for a season,
Pleasaunce, where I love to linger,
I must leave thee, and the reason :
Duty points an eastward finger.
Guard for some not distant morrow
All the magic of thy beauty :
It shall aid me vanquish sorrow,
When I shall have done my duty.

SAPPHICS

Love at Versailles

Once by the glittering borders of the fountains,
Where over nature the art of man triumphant
Reigneth, as shadow followeth a sunbeam,
Passed I with Phyllis.

Bright as the midday all the vanished glories
Of the Sun [1] King's court moved in parade before me,
As from her lips, like bees from a hive of honey,
Flew recollections.

"See where the marble, white from the hills of Paros,
Shews rosy veinings, as of a courtier driven
Forth from the Sun King, into the night of exile,
Bleeding his heart's blood.

"Mark the crowned casement, where the Queen [2] of Louis,
Mary of Austria, of the House of Eagles,

[1] Louis XIV. [2] Marie Thérèse.

Child of the children of the Roman Cæsars,
Dwelt for a short space;

"Till on a day the face of Athénaïs,[1]
Like to a blush-rose caught in the mane of lion,
Drave the Queen weeping forth from the queenly chamber:
'Thunder and triumph': [2]

"These were thy portion, proudest of Hetairai,
Thou that scarce deignedst move but a step in greeting
Unto thy courtiers of the blue blood royal:
Served by a Condé!

"These were thy portion till the tiny twinkling,
As of a faint star lost on the far horizon,[3]
Heeded of no man, waxed on the night portentous,
Waxed to a comet,

"Trailing a splendour through the fields of Heaven,
Nor waned at midday, but to the sun thy Master

[1] Françoise Athénaïs, Marquise de Montespan, mistress of Louis XIV.

[2] "La Marquise de Montespan, tonnante et triomphante." —*Madame de Sévigné.*

[3] Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, governess to the children of the Marquise de Montespan by the King.

Sped and thy glory melted as wings of mortal
Over Ægean."

Thus as she spake I followed her down the ages,
Followed by paths made straight or that curved so gently
Under the emerald canopy of chestnuts
Myriad shaded;

Passed and we came unto the fair pink Palace,[1]
Kissed by the jasmines climbing with yellow petals,
Watered with bright spray from a ring of fountains,
Dragonfly-haunted.

Blue, white, and purple, butterflies came crowding,
Lit on her fair curls, leaving the rose deserted;
Down from the chestnuts' bosom the doves of Lesbos
Flew to her shoulder,

Cooing with red beaks dipped in the blood of lovers,
Cooing with voices broken like sighs of lovers

[1] Trianon.

Couchant in green bower of enchanted forest,
Hidden from all men.

" Now speak thy love, now speak or for aye be silent :
Lo ! Cytherea prompts by her cooing minions !"
Yet the words came not, seeing the grip of passion
Choked me to silence ;

Silence or stray speech, like to leaves of autumn
Down sailing earthward, useless and soon forgotten
By the slim poplar pointing the way to heaven,
Sure of the springtide.

" Come see the pleasaunce,[1] where the Queen of Lilies [2]
Shook as a swan shakes snowy down the ermine
Off from white shoulders and by right of beauty
Only would triumph."

Thus as she spake, we passed o'er the bridge and with us
Rustled the doves' wings, while the garden-haunters

[1] Petit Trianon. [2] Marie Antoinette.

Fluttered around us, blue and white and golden,
Forming an escort.

Here by the chestnuts, brought within my seeing,
Gathered resplendent shades of illustrious dead;
Wide spread the robes, bright flashed again the rapiers,
Diamond-hilted.

Fain would I plead, but failed before the brilliance,
Conjured by her to life and speech again:
Rohan and Fersen meeting in the pathway
Princesse de Lamballe!

"Ah! see the Queen, the Queen herself a-coming,"
Passed from red lip to lip of those fair ghosts,
As on a grassy bank by the Cottage Palace,
Circled with courtiers,

Stood the great lady, like to heraldic lily
Planted in green sward, while the waving welcome,
Welcome of doffed plumes, welcome of friendly faces,
Flew forth to greet her.

Quick as a moon-glimpse vanished the airy vision,
Vanished! I found me standing alone with Phyllis,
Gazing on blue eyes, while around was silence;
Only the fountain

Rippled in cadence, as I voiced my pleading,
Which like the fountain rose from the depths deep-hidden:
"Oh fair magician, Queen of the past and present,
Grant me the future!"

Then in the golden language of Apollo
Shone forth her answer, shone from her eyes of azure:
"Present and past and future, O belovèd,
These all I give thee."

Fare thee well, fountain, fare thee well, pink Palace,
Farewell, ye visions of the illustrious dead:
Won is the past, the present and the future,
Won is my Phyllis!

GOOD FRIDAY'S HOOPOE

On the holiest day of the holy seven,
As the Powers of Evil strove
With the Son of Man come down from Heaven,
We walked in the silvery grove.

Like a dart from the north to the south it flew,
Gray bird of the red-gold crest;
Ah! then we remembered what once we knew,
How it went on a holy quest.

. . . . . .

Three birds of the northern world took wing
When they knew the Lord would die,
Their best of feathery help to bring
In His long agony.

The Straightbill in his weed of brown,
The Robin Whitebreast too,
And a little gray bird of no renown
The gray and black Hoopoe.

They came to the land of sand and stone:
Christ Jesu nailed to tree!

Fierce blazed the sun ; they heard him groan,
Heard Paynims' mockery.

Quoth Whitebreast : " I will staunch the blood
That flows from His wounds so red " :
Quoth Straightbill : " Mine the hardihood
To pluck the thorns from His head."

Quoth the gray Hoopoe : " I will fly before
His kind eyes and the sun,
To shield His face whom I adore,
Until the Day be done."

And thus did they, and when Lord Christ
Of Whitebreast's deed was ware,
Quoth He unto the Robin Whitebreast :
" Of Me thou hast had care ;

" Now what can I do for thee, Robin dear ?
What wouldest thou for reward ?—
Ask what thou will'st withouten fear,
Of Jesus Christ thy Lord."

Quoth Whitebreast : " Sir, my breast is red
With Thy dear blood this day :
These feathers where Thy blood was shed
I would they were red alway."

" So be it," answered the Lord Christ,
" Red shall thy breast remain,
Ay, red for ever the Robin's red breast
That strove to soothe My pain."

" And thou that pluckest thorn on thorn
From the crown upon My brow—
Bent is thy beak, thy plumage torn,
What guerdon askest thou ? "

Quoth Crossbill on the thornless crown :
" I would my bill were crossed
Alway, and changed my robe of brown—
Lest the memory be lost."

Quoth Jesu Christ the Lord : " Thy beak
For ever crossed shall be
And pink the Crossbill's plumes that streak
The drops that came from Me."

Then Jesus looked on the Hoopoe
That ever with brave gray wing
As a shield of love before Him flew,
A gray shield quivering.

" And thou, Hoopoe, that long hast flown
Betwixt Me and the sun,

Right dear thy small gray form hath grown,
A great reward hast won."

" Sir," quoth the Hoopoe, " nought for me
I crave but to remain
The little gray bird that shielded Thee
And strove to ease Thy pain."

Quoth Jesus : " Bird, thou hast chosen best,
Let the rays thou hast kept from Me
For ever in thy plumèd crest
Shine for a memory."

Thus spake the Christ, Theresa dear,
Unto the gray Hoopoe
That on the holiest day of the year
Through the silvery olives flew.

A FRIEND IN NEED

(To the Memory of Eça de Queiroz)

ONCE in the ancient city
Segovia of Castile,
Dwelt the knight Don Ruy de Cardenas,
Whose faith was true as steel,

In the dwelling-house that stood beside
And in the silent shade
That our Lady of the Pillar's Church
In the long evenings made.

Facing this House, across the square,
Where the ancient fountain danced,
Frowned the Lord of Lara's Palace,
Like gloom by mirth enhanced.

To the knight his Virgin Godmother,
Since the day of his christening,
Had Our Lady of the Pillar
As a real mother been.

For though he loved to ride a-tilt,
The chase and rich regale,

And eke a night with his friends at cards,
He served Her not less well.

Each morning at the hour of Prime
He sought Her Holy Place,
And with Ave Maria chaunted thrice
Craved Her blessing and Her grace.

Right often at the Vesper hour
Would he kneel at Her shrine once more,
And Salve Regina Coeli
Gently would murmur o'er.

Now likewise in Segovia
In that old time dwelt one,
With neck like royal heron's.
With locks like rays of sun.

Ah ! fair was she as roses
And delicate as dawn,
And seventeen summers scarce had kissed
Her wimple of the lawn.

Though you sought Castile and Aragon,
Though you travelled every Spain,
A pair so fair as he and as her
You would have sought in vain.

But alas no maiden was she,
Bride to old Lara's Lord,
Who in his gray deciduous years
Had wed this child adored.

Right jealously he guarded her
Within that palace grim,
All builded of black granite stone,
With windows barred and dim,

And mighty gate all iron clad,
And sombre deep arcade,
But garden walled and green and cool,
Where she might find the shade.

Yea, it was guarded round about
With a most lofty wall,
That scarce the tallest cypress tops
Looked on the square at all.

Only the Sunday of all the week
Came the Lady Leonore
Forth in two stalwart lacqueys' guard,
With one whose eyes were more

Wide staring than the caged owl's,
Who bare her book of Hours;
The Lacqueys stalked on either side,
Immense as brethren towers.

She left the Palace, crossed the square
And sought the house of God,
A prisoner revelling in the sun
And every stone she trod.

This only visit vouchsafed her Lord
To the Lady Leonore,
Lest he offend the Queen of Heaven
And the monk his confessor.

It fell upon a June morning
That as she kneeled before
The altar in her radiant youth,
Long lashes drooping o'er

Her rosary, that young Don Ruy
Drew near with flow'ry spray
Of jonquils, pinks and gilliflowers
To make Her altar gay.

He saw the flowers, he saw the sun
And the church ere he entered in,
But when he saw that fair lady
He knew not other thing :

White with a lily's whiteness
Blooming in yonder shade,
Yet whiter with the whiteness
That her black mantilla made.

When first he did behold her
He forgot to kneel and pray,
When again he did behold her
She stole his soul away.

His flowers they fell beside him
As useless now indeed—
Where the flower of the world was blooming
They were but as a weed.

Slowly his stolen senses
She rendered him again,
And he knelt to his Virgin Godmother,
But his prayer was all in vain.

He could think but of the vision
Ineffable that was nigh,
For her alone his life would live,
To clasp her once would die.

When his graceless prayer was over,
He took his sombrero
And down the sounding nave he went
To the porch, where in a row

The lousy beggars craved an alms,
As they loitered in the sun;
Don Ruy, love's beggar, stood with them,
As verily he were one.

There as he stood and waited long,
  Hard beat his heart for fear,
Then almost ceased within his breast,
  When he felt her draw anear.

But she, she marks him not at all,
  Or fears to raise her eyes,
Beneath her close-drawn veil she goes,
  With her his whole soul flies ;

He marks her pass across the square
  In the light of the splendid sun ;
But when in the dim arcade she's lost,
  He groans as if undone :

" This then is Lara's lady,
  That Donna Leonore,
Famous throughout the two Castiles—
  The weight of Love is sore."

Then six days long he sat him down
  On his window-seat of stone,
And he gazed at the place where he saw her last,
  Till his eyes were pictures grown.

At last came the lingering Sunday,
  And bearing carnation bloom
To deck the shrine of his Godmother,
  They crossed as from out the gloom

Of the iron door and the dim arcade
She sailed like the risen moon—
Almost his flowers fell from his hands,
Almost he fell in swoon.

But she, she raised to him her eyes
Reposeful and serene,
Not knowing aught of passion's flames
That raged and roared between.

The young knight entered not the Church,
Withheld through pious fear,
Lest he of things divine should fail,
When mortal love was near,

But again amid that lousy crew
He waited, and the flowers
Were parched for the heat of his trembling hands,
Him-seemed a score of hours,

Ere down the long, long nave his heart
Came rustling with her gown,
As o'er the marble slabs she passed;
She did not smile nor frown,

Simply that lady passed him by,
Who held his heart in thrall;
The same calm, heedless, absent look
Upon him let she fall

As on the beggars and the square,
  Either not witting why
Sudden so pale the knight had grown,
  Or careless wittingly.

Don Ruy sighed deeply, moved away,
  Sought out his chamber straight,
And before the Virgin's image set
  Those flowers he had not laid

Upon Her altar in Her Church—
  Then all his life grew dark,
Because the furnace in his soul
  Had failed to light one spark

In her that was compact of ice ;
  Then 'gan he round her walls
With hopeless hope to pace and pace,
  Or where her shadow falls

On the bars of the lattice windows
  Hour-long he wont to gaze—
But the bars came not asunder,
  Nor through them hopeful rays.

The whole vast gloomy mansion
  Loomed like a sepulchre
Encircling with its massy walls
  One heartless body fair.

Then o'er the parchment leaning
Don Ruy would verses make
Most dolorous of love despised—
But failed his love to slake.

Before the Virgin's altar
Kneeled he where she had knelt,
In musings bitter-sweet sunk deep,
Yet no relief he felt ;

The whole wide world, to him it seemed,
Where not of stone was ice—
Albeit on a Sunday morning
He had passed her twice or thrice,

So heedlessly she gazed on him
That he had liefer chosen
Rather with anger she should glow,
Than to be thus coldly frozen.

As royally remote was she
As a star in Heaven above,
Unconscious of the eyes on earth
That upward yearn with love.

Then thought Don Ruy, she will not love
And I, I cannot more ;
May Our Lady hold us both in grace—
Now is the love-dream o'er.

And seeing that most discreet he was,
And now most clearly saw
Her fixed in cold indifference,
He made for him a law,

That never would he seek her out,
Nor never look on high
To the gratings of her windows,
Nor if he should descry

From the porch of Our Lady's chapel
Her golden graceful head
Bent o'er her Book of Hours
Would he then the marble tread.

II

Now over all the silence
Of things that might not be
Could very well have fallen,
Save for the jealousy,

Which like a thief had entered in
To the Lord of Lara's breast,
And rulèd there as on a throne,
So deep he did detest

The young knight, Guy de Cardenas,
For when, perched falconwise,
He had seen the Lady Leonore
Meet the darts of the gallant's eyes,

Though upon her swan-white coat of proof
Those darts no impress made,
They rankled all within his breast,
As he tore his beard with rage.

Henceforth the Lord of Lara's spies
Watched every step he took—
Where'er he sojourned, hunted, played,
Was writ down in a book.

But for the Lady Leonore,
More closely yet watched he
Her every silence, speech, the stitch
Of her embroidery ;

He watched her as she came from Church,
As she mused beneath the tree,
In the garden where she wont to sit,
But even jealousy
Ardent as his could find no flaw
In stainless chastity.

Thereupon this tyrant's fury
Turned with a whetted edge

Against the youth that dared desire
The bird he kept in cage.

His was her bright sun-coloured hair,
Her neck of royal herne,
And when he thought of young Don Ruy
For rage his heart did burn.

He paced his sombre galleries,
In furry jerkin lined,
His grizzled beard thrust out before,
His tangled locks behind;

Ever the same the gall he chewed—
A double death shall die
He who assailed her honour
And mine honour dared defy;

Nor to his evil jaundiced mind
Availed it even one jot
That never now the cavalier
Sought out the self-same spot

As had the Lady Leonore—
Nay, rather held aloof—
And when he entered not the Church
Esteemed he this a proof,

That deeper lay the young knight's schemes
Than mortal eye could see ;
Therefore the order sent he forth
That now no longer she

Once even in the week go forth,
But on the Sabbath Day
Himself would hasten to the Church,
Kneel and the Rosary say ;

Then jibbering, leering, bow him down
Before the Virgin's shrine,
Excuse his spouse, " who cometh not,
For cause Thou dost divine."

Thus having made secure without,
He made secure within ;
Himself the bolts of every gate
Slid to with fingers thin ;

Along the shadowy moonlit sward
Of the walled garden prowled
Two bloodhounds of right savage breed
That slew but never growled ;

A naked sword lay by his bed
At the table whereupon
Were his lamp and reliquary,
His wine with cinnamon

And cloves made ready to give force
And the torch of love to light—
Youth sacrificed to antic lust—
That breaks the heart of night!

Oft he would wake, a grisly man,
Between the pillows deep,
And clawing rude fair Leonore,
Awaken her from sleep

With bruises on her snowy neck—
Say that thou lov'st me only—
And with break of dawn he would perch and spy,
Like a falcon brooding lonely.

But though thus carefully he watched
From his lofty latticed perch,
Never the knight now passed him by,
Nor entered in the Church,

When clear the Angelus rang out,
Nor toward the country riding—
Which all for him was proof how clear
The twain their love were hiding.

At length one night, when he had trod
The flags of his gallery
By the long hour, his doubt and hate
Revolving inwardly,

He cried out that his steward should come,
And forthwith gave command
That pack and saddle be prepared,
Ready at dawn to stand

And bear them to his rural fief,
Cabril, two leagues of way ;
But though thus early all prepared,
Long hours of the day,

Her litter waiteth in the shade,
With its curtain open wide,
While a stable lad leads his lord's white mule,
Which Moorish trappings hide,

Backward and forward in the shade,
While beneath the sun and flies
He-mules their bells a-jingle
Keep the strait street in surmise,

Laden with trunks that iron rings
Hold stedfast in their places,
And muleteers stand at their sides,
With dark-eyed swarthy faces.

Thus learned Don Ruy and all the town
That Lara's Lord departed ;
But since Don Ruy now hoped no more,
So was he not down-hearted.

III

Now the Lady Leonore rejoiced
  Dwelling at fair Cabril
With its orchards and its gardens
  And its lawn-meandering rill,

And its spacious marble balconies,
  All sunlight and all flowers
Which she might tend, and birds to feed,
  And she might muse for hours

By paths of laurel and of yew,
  Girt with no hateful walls—
So wide they were they seemed to her
  Like Freedom's woody halls.

And timidly she dared to hope
  That the pure, fresh, country air
Would lift from off her master's mind
  His load of heavy care.

But this was not to be, alas,
  For always up and down
As in Segovia he paced
  In the self-same sheepskin gown,
Through the sounding, vaulted gallery,
  Wearing the self-same frown.

His gray beard was thrust out before,
  His thick hair tangled back;
Oft he would snarl and show his teeth,
  As brooding vengeance black.

Few were the words he spake to her,
  She dared not speak to him
First lest he burst in furious rage,
  Whose silence was so grim.

IV

One night when the Lady Leonore
  By the light of a waxen torch
Within her chamber told her beads,
  There passed 'neath the Moorish porch

The Lord of Lara, grim and slow,
  Bearing within his hand
A sheet of parchment and a pen
  Dipped in a bone inkstand.

With a rough sign her maidens,
  Who feared him as the bear,
He drave forth from her chamber,
  To the table drew a chair,

Then to the Lady Leonore
He turned a smiling face,
As though the thing that he would ask
Were but a trifling grace.

"Lady, I beg you write me here
What 'tis needful that you write;"
She bowed in all obedience,
And he began, "My Knight."

This writ she clear, with graceful, long
White fingers on the sheet,
Heedful that every letter formed
Should be both clear and neat.

But when in rasping voice he hissed
The next and longer line,
Down dashed the pen as 'twere afire,
And she cried, "O husband mine,

"Why must I write such false, false lies?"
—Her voice was all a tear—
Then the Lord of Lara's fury
Burst forth, and in her ear

He hissed, "You write what I command,
Or this dagger 's in your heart;"
More white than the torch of wax she grew,
And chose the craven's part.

"By the Virgin Mary, harm me not,
I live but to obey!
Speak now, and what you speak I write;"
Then the dagger he did lay

Upon the table, clenched his fists
On the ends and crushed his slave
With his hard wounding eyes, and thus
The felon missive gave.

Unwittingly she did his will
And spread the net to snare
The lover of whose name or face
She never yet was 'ware.

Thus spake he, thus she writ, "My Knight,
Or ill you understood,
Or very ill repayed my love;
But now make all things good,

"Which at Segovia you lacked—
Nor dared I then discover
How ardently I longed for you,
Don Ruy, my own true lover;

"But now my husband fares afield
And at Cabril all is plain;
Ride then to-night the two short leagues
To the garden by the lane,

"Then pass the fish-pond on your right
And when you reach the terrace,
You will see a ladder resting on
The wall by the window—there is

"The chamber of your own true love!"
"Now sign your name below—
For that is needful above all"—
She signed with cheeks aglow,

As if before a crowd she stripped—
"Now write your lover's name—
Don Ruy de Cardenas"—she writ
With modest cheeks aflame.

Now was all done; he gathered up
The parchment in his hand,
Placing it with the dagger
Thrust in his girdle's band.

He left her crouching in the gloom
All pierced through with fright,
Her wearied hands were in her lap,
Her gaze lost in the night.

Who was Don Ruy de Cardenas,
Name to her all unknown,
That passed the portals of her life,
With so few memories sown?

Yet he, he knew her of a truth,
Had followed her with his eyes,
Since it was fitting that from her
Should come such promises.

He knew her—nay, he knew her well,
Since 'twas her husband's will
He should mount up to her chamber
In the night when all was still.

Then in a flash she saw the truth
And gave an anguished cry—
He would come to Cabril lured by her,
At Cabril he would die

By the Lord of Lara's hand whose hate
His honour thus defiled,
And to a murderous ambuscade
A gallant knight beguiled!

Some glance, some movement of Don Ruy,
Some eye's flash caught aside,
Because Don Ruy so deep did love,
Her husband must have spied.

But how, when was it, who was he?
Then dimly she remembered
The noble youth that flowers bore,
But not to her had tendered.

Right noble, yet right pale he was,
As he stood at the Church's door;
His eyes were large and passion-full,
Red and yellow flowers he bore,

For whom? Ah, could she warn Don Ruy,
Before the break of day!
Here was no help, she but a slave,
The fates must have their way.

Ah! could she warn him!—twenty-five—
Those were his years all told—
Two tears fell from her teeming eyes
And on her hands they rolled;

Then all that she, poor soul, could do,
She did, to save her lover;
On bended knee she fell and raised
Her soul to heaven above her.

Just then the moon began to shine,
As she prayed in faith and woe;
"O Virgin of the Pillar, watch
And guard him from his foe."

V

Don Ruy was entering his house
With its courtyard orange-shaded
What time the sun in heaven rode high,
When a peasant who had waited

An hour upon a seat of stone
Within the shade, arose,
Gave him a letter murmuring
"No time I have to lose,

Therefore make answer straight—no need
There is to write reply,
Only make sign you have received—
For to Cabril I must hie

To the person that hath sent me here."
As pale as death Don Ruy
Read the missive from his newfound love,
Pulled from his hand a broidered glove,
Which the peasant hastily

Stowed in his scrip and fast away
On his sandal points was creeping,
When the knight cried after him, "What road
To Cabril are you keeping?"

"By the speediest and the loneliest road
I hasten to Cabril—
But he must have an iron heart
That goes by Gallows Hill."

"Good," quoth Don Ruy, and climbed the stairs
That led to his latticed chamber;
Then read he again those blessed words,
Then gloated upon those golden words,
That summoned him to claim her.

Nor was he by this sudden change
In any way astonied—
Rather he saw there love more strong,
That waiting warily waits long
And stakes the present on it.

Loved by the Lady Leonore,
Since that wondrous Sunday morning,
When their eyes had crossed in Our Lady's porch
And he fancied she was scorning!

And while he circled round her walls
Mourning how cold was she,
Lo, she had given him her soul,
And full of constancy,

Choking her sighs and every sign
That might lead to suspicion,

Make ready the night when the body too
Would go where the soul was given !

Ah ! such her firmness, such her wit,
Yet in the affairs of love,
Most beautiful and most desired
Was she, set far above

The weak that rush, that falter and blush
Leading the way to ruin—
For many's the ambush set for love
And there stumble not a few in.

Impatiently he watched the sun
Sink slowly to the west,
And in his chamber ready made
All that he had of best—

Fair laces and a jerkin black
With essences perfumed,
And cared that his steed in stable
Was well shod and well groomed ;

Then bent he the blade of his good sword
Upon the chamber floor,
Then bent again, then conned again
Her missive o'er and o'er.

VI

The sun is sunken in the west,
  There's evening in the air,
Don Ruy has leaped a-horseback,
  Rides slow across the square.

He is riding with his sombrero
  Clear lifted from his face,
As though he seeks the evening airs
  Beyond the walls a space ;

He meets with none till he hath won
  To the limit of the city,
Where a beggar at St Mauros gate
  Cries out to him for pity.

Don Ruy reins in to throw him alms,
  When he minds him suddenly
That he hath not prayed the livelong day,
  Nor at Vesper bent the knee,

To crave of Mary Godmother
  Her blessing, quick mounts down ;
On Her image by the arch a lamp
  Flickers o'er Her golden crown,

And Her breast with the Seven Swords trans-
pierced—
He kneels him by the way,
And Salve Regina Coeli,
Hear him passionately pray.

Yellow the radiance of the light
Upon Our Lady's face—
Either She feels not the Seven Swords
Or has from them solàce,

For with bright red lips she smiles on him,
And whiles that he's a-kneeling,
Lo, the small bell at St Dominic's
Sets up a muffled pealing.

Quoth the beggar from the black archway ;
" There lies a friar a-dying ; "
Don Ruy for him an Ave saith,
With lips and thoughts a-flying.

The Virgin of the Seven Swords
Smiles as he takes his way,
The languid moon is at the full,
But scarce her yellow ray

Tops yet the range of the long low hills ;
Dim is the aloe grove,

Through which he rides—'tis early yet—
He fears to seek his love,

Ere that her men and maidservants
With their daily tasks be over,
Ere yet the Rosary be said—
But his fancy plays the rover;

Into the garden at Cabril
It breaks and scales the ladder—
And he—he follows it apace,
And madder yet and madder

He gallops o'er the ill-laid road
Fast as his fancy flies;
Then he reins in his panting steed—
"Too early yet," he cries.

And his heart beats against his ribs,
Like prisoned bird in cage;
Then slowly, slow, he paces on,
Till at the roadside's edge

He spies the Calvary where the road
Splits like a fork in twain —
To the Crucified he doffs his hat—
Then suddenly draws rein;

For both roads pierce the pine forest
And he remembers ill
Which leads unto Xaràma
And which to the Gallow's Hill.

In the shadows of the gloomier road
Already he advances,
When between the stems of the silent pines
He sees a light that dances—

'Tis an ancient dame in rags yclad,
With long and flowing tresses,
Leans on a staff and bears a lamp,
And her the knight addresses—

" Canst tell me whither leads this road ? "
Then the lamp she swings more high
That the better she the knight may see :
" To Xarama " makes reply.

Then light and ancient dame they melt
Into the night together,
As though they had risen up there to warn
The young knight of his error.

He turns already with a dash
And rounds the Calvary,
And along the other broader road
He gallops furiously,

Till against the brightness of the sky
He sees the pillars black
And the black beams of Gallows Hill ;
Then he reins his courser back

And motionless in his stirrups stands—
There on the tall bare hill,
Four granite pillars rise up black,
Four beams their spaces fill
And four hanged men depend therefrom,
Rigid and black and still.

Ay, dead they be and all around
Seems dead indeed as they,
The moon is full, upon the beams
There roost two birds of prey.

Then the knight the Paternoster said,
From every Christian owed
To guilty souls, then urged his steed
Along the moonlit road,

When in the silent solitude
A voice arose, resounded,
A voice that supplicated slow—
He stops his steed, astounded ;—

" Knight, stay, come hither," cries the voice—
He casts astonished eyes

Over that ominous hillside
That deadly tranquil lies.

"Some wandering demon 'tis that calls,"
Quoth he and spurs his horse,
Yet not at all he fears but wills
To hasten on his course.

But now behind him comes again
That voice most urgent, clear,
With anxious terror fraught, "Stay Knight,
Return, return, draw near!"

Again Don Ruy reins in, again
He in his saddle turns,
And on the four dead men he looks,
For bright his courage burns.

Certès from one of them came forth
The voice that just now cried
Thus anxiously, thus urgently,
And would not be denied.

Did there in any linger yet
Perchance the breath of life?
Or for a marvel greater yet
Did one of the dead men strive

To warn him from beyond the grave
Of some impending evil ?
But whether that human voice came forth
From God or from the Devil,

'Twould be to play the craven's part,
Were he to ride away,
Ere he had heard of good or ill
What the voice might have to say.

Therefore he spurs his trembling horse
And up the hill doth ride ;
Then stops erect and calm, his hand
Resting upon his side.

Right steadfully he looks upon
Those four suspended bodies—
" Which of you hanged men dared to call
Don Ruy de Cardenas ? "

Then the man whose back is to the moon
Makes answer quietly,
As a man that from a window talks
To the street ; " Sir, it was I."

Don Ruy spurs on his horse, but yet
Hidden the hanged man's face is—
Sunken and hidden in his breast
By his long black falling tresses.

"What want you of me that hang there?"
"I pray you, Sir, to sever
The cord by which I am hanging up"—
His sword with slight endeavour

Severs the cord; with bones that clash
To the ground the dead man falls,
And for a moment lies outstretched;
But suddenly recalls

His feet from limbo, ill-secure,
All withered, pitiful,
And toward Don Ruy a dead face lifts—
'Tis little but a skull,

O'er which the skin is tightly glued—
More yellow than the moon—
Nor light nor motion shew the eyes,
But the lips are parted soon,

Making a grinning, stony smile;
'Twixt the white teeth the tongue
Comes forth, a point of black, the hands
Are free, the cord unstrung,

Whereby encircled is the neck;
Don Ruy quite calmly breathes,
For he fears not that hangèd man;
Calmly his sword he sheathes

And asks him; "Art thou quick or dead?"
"I know not, none may know
What death and what life be." "Then say
What service do I owe

To you, that thus you call me here?"
With fingers fleshless, long,
The hanged man made more loose the cord
That round his neck yet clung;

Then calmly and right firmly spake;
"I must fare with you to Cabril."
God's Wounds! That made the knight to start
That hardly he was able

To sit his horse, reared up for fright—
So sharp the reins he jerked.
"With me to Cabril?" Then the hanged
On him for pity worked.

"Sir, grant me this (right earnestly
The hangèd man implored),
For if I do you a great service,
Mine is a great reward."

Then suddenly to the knight it seemed
That this full well might be
Some Devil's trickery framed to slay
His soul's felicity.

Therefore no answer he vouchsafed
To the dead face upturned,
To the ghastly face upraised to him,
That with anxious longing yearned ;

But slowly and with large, bold sweep,
He made the sign of the Cross ;
Then the hanged man bent his pious knees ;
" Sir, wherefore try me thus ?

By this alone we hope for grace
And of our sins remission."
" If he be not by the demon sent,
Mayhap with God's permission

He moves upon the earth again "—
Then the knight dismissed his doubt,
Trusting his future all to God
With a gesture all devout.

" With me to Cabril you shall fare,"
Quoth he to the hanged man,
If it be that Heaven hath ordered so ;
Then behold the hanged one ran

By his stirrup on the stony road
With steps so airy, light,
That it seemed as he were borne along
By the silent wind of night.

Fast, fast Don Ruy was galloping now
  Twixt hedges of wild-flower scent;
" 'Tis good to run," quoth the hangèd one,
  And he breathed with deep content.

Now was Don Ruy's whole soul o'erflowed
  With amazement and with care,
For he saw quite clearly evident
  That to do some service rare

This corpse had been revived by God;
  But such companion,
Plucked straight from out the nether hell
  Wherefore had he been chosen?

Efstoons! had God no angels more
  In all the courts of Heaven,
That He must needs upraise a man
  Whose life was rightly riven

For some nefarious, felon stroke,
  To guard fair Leonore
For piety beloved of heaven?
  Right fain he had turned once more

His steed toward Segovia,
  Right fain given o'er his quest,
Save for the pride of a gallant knight
  And the weight of God's behest.

For he felt right heavy weigh on him
As he galloped through the night
The hand of Almighty God in Heaven,
Though the dead man's hand was light.

VII

Now as the living and the dead
On the high road took their way,
Those dead eyes and those living eyes
Beheld where Cabril lay

Below, all bathed in moonlight,
And the Franciscan towers,
And the farmhouses sleeping too
Amid the garden flowers.

Then silently, quite silently,
With never a dog that bayed,
Down to the Roman bridge they passed,
And there the dead man stayed

Before the Calvary, his knees
On the flag stones pressing were,
And the livid bones of his hands he raised,
And long he dwelt in prayer.

And very deep he sighed, but then
Great draughts of joy drank he
From a fair spring that singing ran
Beneath a willow tree.

And now—for the path was very straight,
Before the knight he stalked,
Who thought with bitterness of soul
On the bliss the hanged man baulked.

Such was the will of God, but ah !
How desolate the thought,
That to the loved one's promised door
A guest so awful brought !

Now to the end of the lane they came,
And the hanged man stopped and raised
His arm, whereof the tattered sleeve
At his least motion played.

Before them now the long high wall
Of Lara's homestead shone,
With its belvedere and balconies,
All ivy overgrown.

" Sir," quoth the hanged man, as he held
The stirrup of Don Ruy,
" The gate of the garden lieth close,
We must go warily ;

"And best it is that you leave your steed
Fast tethered to this yew,
For the sound of our footsteps is too much
In the business that we do."

Silent Don Ruy obeyed and now
The hanged man tiptoe went,
On the least noise in that silent world
Distrustfully intent;

And the knight followed by the wall
Flooded with clear moonlight;
The hanged man careful watched its top
And the black hedge on the right.

And now this cautious fear in one
Beyond all human evil,
Filled also slowly that brave knight
With a sense of deadly peril;

So that he drew his dagger forth,
Threw his cloak around his arm,
And walked on guard with flashing eyes
That sought some hidden harm.

Then to a little gate they came;
A push—it opened wide
On an avenue and a lily-pond,
With yew trees either side.

Rude seats were round the pond, with flowers'
And twining creepers' charm ;
" This way ! " the hanged man whispered low,
Pointing a withered arm.

Now by another avenue
Beyond the pond they wended—
'Twas the hanged man ever went before,
Close by the knight attended.

Hard by a silver rivulet
Went purling through the grass,
And from the roses on the yews
A wild sweet scent did pass

Stirring the heartstrings of Don Ruy—
With hope beat high his heart—
But " Hush ! Hush ! " quoth the hangèd man,
And raised his arms apart.

Like the bars of a gate they were outstretched
And the knight came nigh to fall
Upon his escort sudden stayed,
Where the light fell full on all.

Four steps of stone before them rose,
They mounted crouching low ;
At the end of a treeless garden,
With flower-beds row by row,

They spied one side of Cabril House,
Where full fell the light of the moon ;
In the midst between breast-high windows closed
Was a balcony of stone

Garnished with pots of basil,
Both windows open wide,
And black as night in the clear moonlight
Was the chamber's self inside.

Most clear against the balcony
Leaned a ladder with rungs of cord ;
Then the dead man pushed aside the knight,
The hanged man played the lord.

" Sir, give me now your hat and cloak,
And stay you very still
Here in the darkness of the trees,
Nor speak a word until

I shall mount to yonder balcony
And in the chamber peer,
And if all be even as you desire
I will return me here."

" Nay, nay, by God ! " the knight cried out,
And he stamped his foot, but the hand
Of the hanged man in the darkness
Tore his hat from his head, the band

Of his cloak wrenched free from off his arm;
These the hanged man did him on,
And as he wrapped him in the cloak,
Beseeched in fervent tone;

"I pray you, Sir, deny me not,
I pray you by the Lord,
For if I do you a great service,
I shall reap a great reward."

He climbs the steps, he moves along
The terrace broad and bright;
Dazed and amazed Don Ruy beholds
Indeed a marvellous sight;

For lo, the hanged man as himself,
Don Ruy, in form and face is;
Lightly and gracefully he moves
Between the flow'ry spaces;

Now smilingly he looks above,
With hand in girdle playing,
And in his hat the scarlet plume
Triumphantly is swaying.

Behold, the chamber of his love
Open and dark is waiting;
Don Ruy stares now with flashing eyes,
And all with wrath vibrating.

He has reached the ladder now, his foot
On the lowest rung engaging ;
" He goeth up, the damned villain,"
Roars out Don Ruy, loud raging.

He goeth up, and now the knight
Sees his own figure tall,
That half way up makes a blot of black
On the whiteness of the wall.

He stops ! But nay ! he hath not stayed—
He mounts ! he gains the top,
And now he carefully prepares
From the window ledge to drop

Into the chamber of his love—
Careful he rests the knee—
The knight's whole soul is in his eyes
That gaze despairingly.

He leaps ! He leaps ! He steals his love !
When lo, from the pitch-black room
Rises a figure, shouts a voice,
" Villain ! thou hast thy doom."

The blade of a dagger rises, falls,
And falling once more flashes—
Like a log the dead man topples down
And the window closing crashes !

Silence and gentle calm on all
And the moon in the summer sky—
But Don Ruy has drawn his sword and stands
Prepared right dear to die.

When lo! yet another marvel!
The hanged man runs across
The terrace, and to the knight he cries:
"To horse, Sir, quick, to horse!"

Thus spake he in the moonlight,
In his breast the dagger blade,
Nailed to the hilt—its shining point
At his backbone issue made.

They hasten along the avenue
By the pond and the rose-twined yews,
And the knight must follow where he leads
Whom the will of Heaven did choose.

Now filled with an awful terror
Is the soul of the brave Don Ruy,
And he plucks the reins with frantic haste
And will by all means flee

Not from a mortal man but from
This awful company—
This night of miracle, these powers
More strong than Destiny.

Now he leaps into his saddle,
And now he gallops fast,
When he feels a dreadful weight behind
Upon the crupper cast.

He needs not turn him round to know
What awful burden lies
Behind, but shivers through and through
As though it were of ice.

Despair ! Despair ! on the endless road
He gallops in wild despair ;
But though the good horse rocks and sways,
One sits quite rigid there,

Like a statue upon a pedestal,
Nor moves from side to side—
The man that for his sake the death
A second time hath died.

At the Calvary the knight cries out,
" Lord aid me " ; then the fear
That forever in eternal night
He must gallop in wild career

With the dead man behind him
Makes him half turn aside,
While the wind whips him in the face :
" Whither will ye that we ride ? "

Then the hanged man leans his body
So close against Don Ruy
That the hilt of the dagger irks the knight,
And he whispers, "Speedily,
We shall come to the hill where the gibbet stands,
'Tis there that I would be."

Oh! then, a surging tide of joy
Swept over the brave knight,
As the hill with its beams and pillars black
He glimpsed in the white moonlight.

Soon the trembling horse was standing,
All foam-flecked on the hill,
And noiselessly the hangèd man
From the crupper slid to fill

The duties of a well-trained squire—
He held the knight's stirrup,
With his black tongue pointing 'twixt his teeth
And his gray skull gazing up.

"Sir, do me now the great favour
To hang me there once more
From the beam wherefrom you cut me down—
For the Lord's sake I implore."

And now the brave knight once again
With ghastly horror shook ;
" I hang you for the Lord's sake, I ? "
" Yea, hang me, Sir, I look

To you for this, 'tis the Lord's will
And Hers that hath His love."
Then the knight got from off his steed
And followed the man above.

And behold beneath the beam they stood,
Those others hanged around ;
The moon descended and there was
Not the least earthly sound.

Don Ruy looked now upon the beam,
Whence the piece of cord yet swayed,
That with his sword he cut, " and how
Can I hang you here ? " he said ;

" With my hand I cannot reach the cord,
Nor hoist you there alone."
" Sir," said the man, " there should lie near
A roll of cordage thrown ;

One end you will tie unto this knot
That is around my neck,
The other cast across the beam,
And the cord it will not break,

When with your strength you hoist me up."
Then both sought for the roll;
'Twas the hanged man that discovered it,
Unrolled, and brought the whole

To the knight, who did him off his gloves,
And by the hanged man taught,
One end of the cord to the hanged man's neck
In the noose he firmly wrought,

The other upward vigorous threw—
Well over the beam it passed,
And nigh to the ground it wavering hung;
Then the knight planted fast

His feet in the dark and brittle soil,
Hoisting with all his might:
Till the man once more swung as before;
Then he cried, "Have I done right?"

Slow, slow and sinking came the voice
Above from the gibbet's beam—
Two vultures waked that slept thereon—
"Sir, I am as doth beseem."

Then to make all fast Don Ruy did wind
The cord round the pillar of stone,
Then upward gazed upon the face
Of Heaven's champion.

Rigid already, as before,
That face was hanging down
Beneath the falling tresses black,
Quite stiff the feet were grown ;

In his breast the dagger yet was nailed—
" What more remains to do ? "
Quoth the knight ; then a whisper from above
Came, " Sir, I beg of you

That when to Segovia you come,
To our Lady you will tell
The manner of our àdventure,
Faithful as all befell ;

Since through Her mercy for my soul
Now is a favour due,
In exchange for that by Her command
My body hath wrought for you."

Then knew Don Ruy de Cardenas
He was rescued by Her care ;
He kneeled upon the ground of death
And offered a heartborn prayer

For the soul of the dead who had died again,
That it should enter bliss ;
Then he leaped upon his eager steed,
Free from all heaviness.

Now was the morning growing clear,
As he passed St Mauros way,
And pealing were the Matin bells
As he kneeled in disarray

At the altar of Our Lady,
His Holy Godmother,
And thanked Her with warm flowing tears
For deliverance from the snare

That had lured him unto Cabril—
And then to Her he swore
That to like evil thoughts of sin
He would open his heart no more.

VIII

Now at that hour in Cabril,
With wide-eyed wonder fraught,
The Lord of Lara every nook
Of his shady garden sought;

For when at dawn he had applied
His ear to the chamber door,
Where the past night with careful hand
He had locked his Leonore,

He hastened to the flow'ry bed
Beneath the balcony,
Where agasp and bleeding—or a corpse—
He thought to find Don Ruy.

But when he found him not, he sought
Each bush and flow'ry bed,
Nay, every shadow probed he close
That might conceal the dead ;

Yet found him not, though well he knew,
That with sure hand he drave
The dagger deep into his heart—
No mortal power could save.

He knew him well, it was the knight,
So gay, so debonair,
With hand on girdle, face upraised,
And plume that danced on air.

And the mightiest marvel yet was this,
That the body stabbed, although
Heavy, inert it fell, yet left
No mark on the ground below,

Where the strip of slender lilies ran
Beneath the balcony—
Not a flower was crushed, all stood erect,
A miracle to see.

Now a sudden panic fills his soul
And wildly now he races
Down terrace, avenue, yew-paths,
Seeking the least small traces—

A footprint or a stain of blood
On the fine sand—nothing there!
Order and neatness—well-kept paths—
And silence everywhere.

The evening fell and Lara's lord,
Bent low and secretly,
Took horse, and to Segovia rode,
Devoured with mystery.

He passed into his palace
By the secret orchard ways,
And straight he climbed to the lofty place,
Whence he was wont to gaze

Across the square, and looked to see
What sable hangings draped
Don Ruy de Cardenas' closed house,
But all the windows gaped

Wide open on him, at the door
An idle stable-boy
Tuned a guitar, then sang a song
That told of lovers' joy.

No house of mourning this could be,
Where thus the menials play ;
Then to the dining-hall he went
And clapped hands angrily

Calling for supper—now he sits
In his chair of carven leather,
And with his steward deigns to drink
A cup of wine together ;

Then draws his fingers through his beard,
Calls a smile to his sombre face,
And asks, " How wags the world in town
Through all these summer days ? "

" Right well, my lord, yet nought of new,"
The bowing steward replies.
" No knight found wounded by the road,
That now a-dying lies ? "

" No, my lord, no, no knight was found,"
Quoth the steward, very loth
To undeceive and be dismissed
With the rumbling of an oath.

Nightlong the lord of Lara paced
His marble galleries,
Ever revolving in his mind
One mighty mystery—

" How could a man whose heart was pierced
Times one and two and three,
And in his breast the dagger nailed,
Yet breathe and live and be ? "

When morning dawned, in ample cloak
All muffled, he descended
Into the square, and to the house
Of the stabbed knight he wended.

There to and fro without he walked,
Till he heard the crier's horn,
Where he stood to read from out a scroll—
But harkened not for scorn

Of all pertained not to his case,
Then suddenly bethought him
That perchance he of the knight discoursed,
Ran forward and besought him

That he again should read the scroll ;
But he would not and departed
With his white staff beating on the stones ;
Then the Lord of Lara started

Again to run to the knight's house,
A muffled villainy,

When walking to our Lady's church
And smiling airily,
In jerkin bright and scarlet plume
He met—the dead Don Ruy.

Fresh as the morning's self he twirls
A stick of golden tassel ;
Then with halting, aged steps, and eyes
That not for the sun's rays dazzle,

The Lord of Lara seeks his house,
And by the entrance gate
Meets his old chaplain, who forthwith
Strange happenings doth relate ;

How the past night on Gallows Hill,
When the Corregidor
Had thither gone on duty bent,
All to prepare before

The feast of the Twelve Apostles,
He had found in a hanged man's breast,
A dagger nailed up to the hilt—
" Was this some vile rogue's jest ?

Or was it vengeance that to quench
Not even death availed ? "
And yet more marvellous, the corpse
From the gibbet had been haled

Through some garden of sweet-scented blooms
And herbs of tender leaf;
For these to the old rags clinging were;
Strange—strange beyond belief—

And yet the truth, since he himself
With his own eyes had seen all,
Had seen the corpse with a new rope hanged.
These words his lord appal,

And in an anguish of suspense,
Hands trembling, hair on end,
To the Gallows Hill he hastens off,
Whom his chaplain must attend

Astounded, breathless, at his side,
And when the Hill they gain,
Lo! a concourse of the townsfolk
Looks on the dead man slain.

For the lord of Lara all step back—
He hurls him to the crest,
And there in the air the stabbed man swings
With his dagger in his breast!

Then unto Cabril with bowed head
He gallops panic-stricken,
And yellows fast and pines away,
As one with fever stricken.

Far from his fair young wife he walked
In the gloomy garden ways,
Somewhat he muttered to the wind,
He groped as in a maze

Upon the ground, until one morn
A serving-maid that passed
From the fountain, with her pitcher filled,
Stared when she saw—aghast ;

Beneath the balcony he lay
With his nails in the lily bed—
Deep-raked the soil where he had digged—
Dead slayer of the dead.

IX

From these sad memories to be free
Went the Donna Leonore,
Heiress of all her lord possessed,
To Segovia once more.

And now she knew that brave Don Ruy
Had 'scaped the ambush set,
But dared not trust her yearning heart,
While she was mourning yet.

Therefore through half-drawn blinds she peeped,
In hidden loveliness,
Watching him cross the square—her eyes
Were wet and weariless ;

And when he entered in the Church
Down sank she on the knee,
And none there was that prayed so long,
So fervently as she.

And afterward, one Sunday morn,
In a robe of purple hue,
Down her palace steps she went at last,
Pale with divine and new

Emotion, trod the flags of the square,
Passed through the Church's door—
Don Ruy de Cardenas was there
Low kneeling down before

The altar, whereupon was laid
His votive, fresh bouquet—
Carnations yellow, saffron, white,
Such brought he every day.

At the sound of her silks he raised his eyes
With hope full of heavenly grace,

As though an angel called him—she
Kneeled with pale raptured face

And heaving breasts, that not more pale
Than the waxen torches were,
Yet the swallows darting through the aisles,
Methinks less happy were.

Before that altar they were wed,
On the same slabs did kneel,
When fourteen hundred had grown old
And the kingdom of Castile

Was by those mighty Princes ruled,
Isabella, Ferdinand,
Through whom the Lord great wonders wrought
By sea and eke by land.

Yet the conquered seas of the Genoese,
Nay, his America,
Less wondrous are than what befell
Hard by Segovia.

THE WINDOW IN HEAVEN

I

On Earth, in Rome

Cœli fenestra facta es (*Anthem of Mary, Queen of Angels*)

Well worth, well worth,
Is a friend upon earth,
On him ye shall set store ;
But who hath the love
Of a Saint above
Hath a friend and somewhat more.

Yet even, yet even,
A Saint in Heaven,
Be he friend or be he foe,
Hath less of might
Than the Virgin bright,
To work ye weal or woe.

Now this tale I tell,
How it befell

To Ambrose, Sacristan,
Who held Her sweeter
Than stern St Peter,
That every Christian man

May somewhat know
Of the powers that flow
From our Lady of Beauty and Pity,
Wherewithal She wardeth
And straitly guardeth
Those of Her Amity.

In the Burgh of Rome
Is St Peter's Dome,
Where the faithful bend the knee,
And with best of oil
Their sins assoil—
For they know who holds the Key.

Now the lamps that shine
Before each shrine
Are the symbol of prayers that rise,
And all together
Should burn for ever
In clear and steadfast wise.

That antient man,
The Sacristan,

Within whose charge these were,
Trimmed all and tended,
But most he bended
O'er one with love and care—

This was the Lamp
That bare for stamp
The Queen of Angels' Face,
As it swung divine
On its silver line
In Her most holy Place.

But on a day
It chanced, perfay,
As the shades of evening crept
Through aisle and choir,
That the golden fire
In the Virgin's lamp uplept;

Then sunk full low,
As if to show
How She did lack for oil;
Which when he knew
That Antient flew,
To aid her in this coil.

By St Peter's shrine
To the Most Divine,

As he hasted, the mighty blaze
From the lamp of Peter
Made stay his feet ere
They had passed without his rays.

Quoth he : " Of a troth
He will not be loth,"
As he dipped with trembling hands :
" Lo the saints' elder Brother
But lends God's Mother
That whereof in need She stands "—

Then his earthen bowl
He emptied whole
Into Her silvery cup—
Right fair and steady
Her mild light shed She,
And Her carven Shrine lit up.

But a felon deed
To St Peter's greed
Seemed the oil from his lamp outpoured,
Though the loss but slight was
And sad the plight was
Of the Mother of his Lord.

For to him most great
Did seem his state

Within his church at Rome—
He raged and sorrowed
When Ambrose borrowed
What to him of right had come.
. . . . .
Whiles the antient slept,
That night, he stept
From the Door of Paradise,
And in voice of thunder
That pious plunder
Rebuked he in this wise :

" Wherefore," quoth he,
" Did ye steal from me
A measure of mine oil ? "—
" I did but borrow
Until the morrow,
To aid Her in Her coil."

Made answer Peter,
" A million greet Her,
From Gaul to Muscovy ;
But here in Rome,
Beneath my Dome,
'Tis *I* am First, not She.

Lo my House is here,
My Tomb is near,

Wherein my body lies,
Which is that block
Of sainted Rock
Whereon Christ's Churches rise.

Here have I lordship,
And here have worship
Before all Saints in Heaven,
Nor will I suffer
That to Another
Aught of mine oil be given.

Behold ! Behold !
This Key I hold,
That openeth Heaven's Door !—
None passeth there,
Save by *my* care—
Of this be very sure ;

And if peradventure
Thou wouldest venture
(With most of hardihood),
Ere thou art come nigh me
That dost defy me,
I will lock Heaven's Door of wood."

Thus spake St Peter,
And swift his feet were

To the Door of Paradise,
(Lest the Snake of Eden,
That lurketh hidden
Should pass in Angel's guise).

Then full of dread
Rose from his bed
Ambrose, with little cheer;
Right swiftly fared he
To Church and cared he
For him whom he did fear.

Small the hope he felt
That he should melt
That Rock, for all his care;
Yet his lamp he burnished,
With oil it furnished,
And many a mumbled prayer.

Now when this was ended,
Her shrine he tended,
Whom most his heart did love;
And "For thee, dear Lady,"
Quoth he, "I've made me
A grievous foe above.

Wrath is the Warden
Of Heaven's Garden

That from him I took for Thee ;
And alace ! alace !
Before my face
Heaven's Door will close on me.

Tell me, sweet Lady,
What help there may be
In my most grievous case—
For no man mortal
May pass Heaven's Portal,
Save by St Peter's grace."

No answer made She,
By day, Sweet Lady,
But behold when he lay abed
That night most bright
Was a golden light
In his poor chamber shed ;

And in robe most clear,
Like the heavenly Sphere,
She smiled on her antient Steward,
And all his trouble
Her comfortable
And dove-soft voice conjured.

Thus to Ambrose spake She,
" Right joyful make thee,

Rest faithful to the end ;
For none may harm thee,
While My Love warm thee,
And first *My* Lamp thou tend.

Vainly Saint Peter
Shall stay thy feet ere
They tread the Heaven's Hall—
Not his to hinder
That thou shouldst win there,
If on My Name thou call.

He telleth truth,
'Tis very sooth,
He holdeth the Key indeed ;
But when the Door he
Shall close before thee,
Be mindful of My Rede ;

Yea, mind thee well
What mine Anthems tell,
How I am the Window of Heaven :
I will open to thee
That lovst Me truly,
And thou shallst enter in.

Thus aid I ever
My Friend's endeavour—

For the Door of Heaven is strait,
And St Peter's pride will
Endure no bridle—
But My Love's Window is great."

Then Ambrose joyed,
By Her Rede upbuoyed,
And the Vision passed away,
And he fell a-praying,
Singing and saying
Her praise by night and day.

And after always
His joy, his solace,
Was *first* Her Lamp to fill—
And every Saint there
Would willing lend Her,
Save one, who thought it ill.

But small heed payed he,
Save to his Lady,
That Her Shrine be first in Honour—
(Let St Peter rage,
Now he hath Her gage,
He will lavish his love upon Her).

For right sure was he then
That Saints in Heaven—

Yea, the hosts of Heaven above—
No wrong may wreak there
On those that seek Her
With faith and zeal and love.

II

Nigh Heaven's Door

See Ambrose shriven
At door of Heaven,
With a mighty Company,
That crave an entry
Of Heaven's grim Sentry—
(Right few the chosen be !)

By the Door of cedar
Frowneth St Peter,
In his hand the golden Key,
And Gabriel,
And Israfel
Bear swords of Ministry.

Lo, the great Key turneth,
The vast crowd yearneth,
Loud creak those silvery hinges,
And those that pray there

Draw nigh as they dare
To the blue and golden inches.

Ambrose with these,
But the Saint's eyes freeze,
Quoth he: "Here cometh one
That did steal mine oil,
Yet would tread Heaven's soil,
Avaunt! thou base Felòn!

Go, get thee hence
And in penitence
Thy felony atone;
Nor again draw nigh me
That dared defy me,
Ere all Time's years are flown."

When the few are chosen
The door claps close then—
(Heaven's thunder heard below)—
And all their groaning,
Their prayers and moaning;
Move not St Peter's woe.

Ambrose bethought him
Of the Rede She taught him
(By the Queen of Angels given),
And swift his feet were

From stern St Peter,
To seek Her Window in Heaven.

But he might not find it,
(For eld nigh blinded
And dazèd for the shine
From myriad jewel
That sparkled cruel
On the battlements divine).

Then he prayed : " O Virgin,
'Tis vain I search in
Heaven's jewelled crevices :
Where Thy Window lieth
No eye espyeth :
Now aid Thou my distress."

Then with strands all golden
A ladder folden
Rolled downward from above,
And a voice full sweet
Him seemed to greet,
Like the voice of a woodland dove :

" Ambrose, behold,
My ladder of gold,
I have let fall for thee,
That leadeth in through

My jewelled Window :
Haste thou to come to Me."

Then with trembling hands
He clasps the strands,
And his old bowed legs aquiver;
But light more light
Than the lark's his flight,
Whom Mary would deliver.

Before Her Throne
Now he falleth prone—
She smiles, the Angels' Queen—
(Her robe he knew
Of Heaven's blue,
And the twinkling stars between).

" Ambrose, fear not,
For thou are got,
Where none can harm thee more ;
Lo ! all wide Heaven
To thee is given—
Thou art past St Peter's Door."

THE HERBARY OF PADUA

To the Honble.
William Peel.

Eldest of the world's old gardens,
Ocean-lapped Hesperides !
Dragons are thy faithful wardens ;
I will throw no sop to these.

. . . . .

Sown with magic seedlings shaken
From Europa's blossomy dress,
By the godlike bull uptaken,
Exquisite in her distress,
Somewhere blooms an old-world garden,
Out of seeing of mine eyes,
When the snows of winter harden,
But in summer clear it lies.
(Rose leaves of the days departed,
Day of days of summer's pride,
Single-heart to single-hearted
Closer by the rose-roots tied !)

. . . . .

Gardens of the world, how often
Have ye wrought in me the mood
Woven of rays that roses soften
When To Be is very good !

O the cool, green English summer—
Lawn and garden, manor-house,
Beauty welcomes the newcomer—
Beauty that hath youth to spouse!
This in England most to praise is—
Beauty budding more and more—
Beauty, buttercups and daisies,
Blossoming at every door!

. . . . .

But the garden that I tell of
Lies at Padua, far away,
Weaves her charm, compounds her spell of
Art and Science, grave and gay.
Venice shone in vernal glory,
Fifteen hundred yet was young,
When began this garden's story;
Simples first, then flowers, sprung.
For Venetians truly laid the
First of seed-beds—Barbaro,
Foscarini, Bonafede—
These be Venice names, I trow.
Ducats gave the Doge and blessing—
Aquileia's Patriarch
Screamed as eagles will, caressing—
Roared the Lion of St Mark.
Thus the garden first was founded,
Chiefly for the body's weal—

Doge Donato's gold abounded,
When Fallopio taught to heal,
Notomy and leechcraft teaching—
But the Doge bade him take heed,
Lest that overmuch of leeching
Slay the flower to save the weed.
When Fallopio had departed
On the road that all men take,
Anguillara, single-hearted,
Laboured all for beauty's sake;
Statuas of saints and sages
Did he artfully dispose:
Chrysostom made friends with Thales,
Reconciled—beneath the rose!
Goddess Flora met Priapus,
Lover's errand bent upon:
Quick she runs to Æsculapius!
Soon the garden god is flown;
For St Antony of Padua
Rising from the loamy sod
Drives him forth a shrieking statua—
Set a saint to catch a god!
But enough of antique fable,
I would sing of what I know,
And to urge the Muse is able
Melchior Guilandino.
For to wander did he cherish,
Ere he filled the Paduan chair;

Twice beheld the Phœnix perish,
Flaming in the Afric air.
Seeking for the herb Nepenthe,
That he might forget the cry
Which the mandrake utters when he
Is uprooted suddenly,
He was seized upon this mission
In the cause of medicine—
Such the grim fates' grim derision—
By the pirates Algerine;
Forced to labour at the galleys,—
All his eloquence was vain—
They received his witty sallies
In a way that gave him pain.
So he toiled and brave withstood the
Blows of fate, until a friend
Payed two hundred golden scudi,
Brought his bondage to an end,
Brought his bondage, not his sorrow:
All but touched Italia's shore,
Fell a tempest, on the morrow,
Nude in Barbary once more,
Must he crave a gracious crossing,
Proffering in his despair
For the privilege of tossing
Once again in Ocean's care,
All he had, which was but zero,
All he hoped, a mine of gold,

For his motto it was " spero,"
And his heart was firm and bold.
When to Genoa wafted safely
By the wind and by the wave,
From his patrons he did crave the
Keeping of the pledge he gave.
Corpo Bacco ! bella Storia !
As he made his buffets known,
Quoth Grimaldi, echoed Doria,
And they made his pledge their own—
Gilded the brown sail that bore him,
Filled his purse, his body clad,
Blew fame's brazen trumpet o'er him—
Melchior was passing glad.
Buffets yesterday a-plenty
Fortune dealt him, but to-day
Favours ten nor favours twenty,
Fickle jade, her hand can stay !
By Girolamo Priuli,
Doge of Venice, Melchior bid,
Took the road to Venice truly
Marvelling at what favours hid
Underneath such mighty sending :
" Vagrant lover of the flowers,
Padua's garden asks thy tending,
Thou shallst know but sunny hours—
Nor henceforth have need to wander,
For beneath the tropic trees

Of the garden thou shallst ponder
Upon nature's mysteries."
Thus was Melchior's fate befitting,
And we say farewell to him
By the *agnus castus* [1] sitting
In the Cinque Cento dim.
Shall I chronicle the wardens,
Careful noting one by one
Just what each did for the garden's
Welfare ?—'twere a task well done;
But Roberto Visiani
Writing sixty years ago
Hath made record of the herbary,
Told me all I want to know,
And a great deal more beside it;
Well I wot that this is verse,
And that ye may yet abide it,
I shall not again rehearse
All that happened in the circle,
Planted round with ancient trees—
Every year a greener girdle,
As the years grew centuries.
Glide we o'er much time together,
Come to seventeen-seventy-four,
Fell an August hail that never
Fell in Padua, and tore

[1] The oldest tree still alive in the garden at Padua.

Herbs and blossoms from their station,
Broke a thousand panes of glass,
Everywhere wrought desolation,
Caused the good Benato pass
All the miseries of Hades,
As he gazed upon a sight,
Which the God of Dreams had made his
Blackest nightmare of the night.
But all gardens are immortal,
Bud again with newcome spring,
And ere long an open portal
Welcomed great ones entering in:
Margarita of Savoia
Dined with learned Paduans here;
To the German poet Goethe
Was this gnarled bignonia dear,
Trailing o'er the wall and greeting
As a brother Goethe's palm,
Which points upward to the fleeting
Clouds in oriental calm.

. . . . .

Paduan herbary, trickling fountains,
Quiet walks where few men come,
Mighty cedars from the mountains,
Marble statues, mossy, dumb!
Ye be all dear friends to dreamers—
What need we of mortal speech

That for nothing now are schemers ?
Each but asks for space from each,
Let each man but do his duty,
Growing as the cedars may,
Death shall garner age and beauty,
Even *agnus castus* slay.
Quiet Paduan garden yonder,
Thanks ! ye gave me joy and peace :
Finding these I will not wander
Further for the Golden Fleece.

THE VAMPIRE AND THE DOVE

I DREAMED I saw a Vampire seize a Dove,
Chief Chariot-bearer of the Car of Love.
Her feathers ivory white did strew the ground,
Her neck that with her glossy head was crowned
Shewed a red wound where Vampire's lips were pressed,
Languid it drooped upon her panting breast.
I dreamed I woke, I dreamed the dream was true,
I dreamed, beloved, that the Dove was you.
I dreamed I dreamed again, and, lo ! the brand
Of Perseus sudden came into my hand ;
I dreamed I plunged it in the Vampire's side
Up to the hilt ; I dreamed the Vampire died,
With horrid quivering of its leathery wings,
With claws all bloodèd and with mouth that stings,
Fallen from my Dove ; I dreamed a woman's face
Glared upward on me from the Vampire's place.
But for the Dove—her gentle head upraised
Resumed perfection, cooingly she praised

This deed of mine, with wounded neck come whole,
While from her eyes shone forth on mine your soul.
No more I dreamed, but woke and waking knew,
O my belovèd, that the dream was true.

THE LILY AND THE SERPENT

Quatrains

See where she passes, laughter-loving eyes,
Brown diamonds set in flesh like flushing skies,
When dawn is white, her little perfect head
Poised on its stem aslant in lily wise.

Beware, beware the rosebud of her mouth,
Wherefrom the jocund voicing of the south
Comes tinkling as a peal of silver bells—
Who tastes of this shall know the desert's drouth!

What of her body? Slim, nor over tall:
Where all is perfect, I have told ye all:
Wherefore dethrone the gods that dwell in heaven,
Or hurl the Paphian from her pedestal?

Ah! when her draperies on the breezes float,
Is she most ravishing, and every note
She speaks is music. Ay, her common speech
Soars upward as the song from skylark's throat.

Turn we the medal, cease a while our praise ;
Now mark the serpent take the lily's place :
Yea, serpents write their cunning arabesque,
Wreathing in circles round her radiant face.

Mark well the serpents glittering in her eyes,
Her voice, Medusa's, uttering only lies ;
Her body is of little serpents made,
Only in lore of evil is she wise.

Here be two shadows thrown upon the screen—
The Lily and the Serpent, white or green :
Choose ye the one, or choosing both, choose right,
Since both she is, being but an Undine.

Child of the woods and waters, vain to find
Soul in her eyes or pity in her mind ;
Never she looks upon the starry sky,
Alas ! to things celestial she is blind.

Content ye then to watch her comb her curls,
Where round her rock the foam-flecked torrent swirls ;
Venture not nigh, for she would draw ye down
And hang your souls about her neck for pearls.

THE SYREN

You have an eye whose glance is love's,
A neck like a lily's stem;
You have a voice more rare than dove's
And a body like a gem.
All these you have and add to these
Your mind of many hues
That kindles genius when you please,
But kills it when you choose.
For in your mind a serpent lies,
Now drowsing, now alert:
Bit by its fangs your lover dies,
And you laugh at his mortal hurt.
Thou must have been a Syren once
That sang beside the sea,
Then tore the soul from the charmèd dunce
Who looked for love from thee.
Perchance it is because to thee
No soul the gods have given
That thou tearest the lover's soul from me,
Who to win thy love have striven.
There is a legend of the East
That tells of the soul's award,

How its every deed from best to least
For future lives is stored.
Now when I die my deeds will shew
How we wasted my golden gifts ;
Strown on the seashore, high and low,
They shift as the sea-sand shifts.
Wasted and ruined utterly,
I shall pay for my ruined soul,
That I gave to a Syren of the sea,
Gave to her claws' control.
Now what can it serve that here I tell
This tale of ruined treasure ?
Thou hast torn my soul—'tis very well,
We will tear our bodies together.

PASSION

You are more melting sweet
Than sun in mid-December ;
I burn from head to feet,
Grow pale as ashen ember ;
I carry in my soul
The thought of you for ever ;
Oil upon ruby coal
The hour we are together.
I hate you for a while,
I love you, love, for ever ;
Heaven opens when you smile,
Hell when we have to sever.

METAPHORS

I GAZE upon the rolling sea,
  I wander through the town,
I search the heavens for glimpse of thee,
  I wander on the down.
And do I find thee ? Yea, my love,
  For thou art everywhere ;
Thy lightsome veils float far above,
  White cloudlets in the air ;
Thy form and features flower the land,
  Thy garb of blue and green
Flows rippling o'er the golden sand,
  To robe thee Mermaid Queen.
All these, what are they ? Shades that fill
  The hollows of thy throne ;
They are but Nature striving still,
  Thou art thyself, alone.

METAMORPHOSIS

How I wish that I could be
Like to you, green willow tree!
Ah! your graceful willow bough,
It is bending o'er me now.
Babe at springtide, youth in May,
Manhood every summer's day!
Ladies I should love ye well,
Ere the chills of autumn fell;
Then a gray-beard, grim, precise,
I should be October wise,
Pass November at the club,
Feet uplifted to the hub;
In December take to bed;
New-Year's Day, I should be dead!
Wreathe me, ladies, in my shroud,
Sing a dirge, not over loud;
Lay me not in coffin close,
Strow upon me leaves of rose;
Leave me lying where ye find me,
Fairy folk will come and mind me.
Just when snow-drops through the snow,
Modest maids, pale faces show,

Ye shall hear an infant cry ;
  Ladies, fear not, it is I !
When the crocus through the mould
  Thrusts his spear of yellow gold,
In February's glinting sun,
  I shall toddle, I shall run.
Ladies in the schoolroom search,
  Noisy March will need the birch.
Sprouting green, an April fool,
  Lo, once more I'm leaving school ;
Lithe of limb and bright of eye,
  I shall at your bidding fly.
Come the merry month of May,
  I shall be a lover gay,
London town and Paris streets,
  I shall sip their sweet of sweets ;
With the end of lusty June,
  Love will ride in heaven at noon ;
I shall carry everywhere
  Twined tresses of the fair ;
On the river we shall float,
  Gliding in our trim-built boat
Muslin Vanity and I,
  Happy human butterfly,
Caring nought for books or art—
  Lovely life, like wine, will dart
Through my veins with ruddy cheer ;
  All a life-time every year !

Fill, July, the brimming cup!
  Fill with nectar, fill it up!
Let me revel that must die—
  Darling, in thy bosom lie!
August comes, with sheaves of gold,
  Ripest fruit and perfume rolled
Into one most perfect whole—
  I do sup the summer's soul!
With the first days of September,
  Most I joy me to remember
Distant days of childhood's blisses—
  Youthful follies, rosebud kisses—
In the merry month of May,
  Many a fleeting hour away.
Rise, November, winter, rise,
  Warning in your weary eyes!
I will lie me down to die.
  Ladies fair, good-night, good-bye.
Fare thee well, green willow tree,
  I shall bud in spring like thee!

DAPHNE

DAPHNE, I place a diamond on thy brow,
Sole worthy thee: I have stolen the Evening Star!
O wiser, thou, than all the wise men are!
When I do laud thy name as I would now,
O then doth gall with pulsing heart's blood war
And victory only to my love allow;
Yet as a wayworn pilgrim from afar
Kneels at the shrine, so I fulfil my vow.

For I will laud thee, Daphne, though these lips
Be parched with too much longing for thy mouth,
And through them but a husky murmur slips,
As of a roseless bee in summer drouth.
Daphne, thy name shall never know eclipse,
While roses bloom and winds blow from the south.

RADIUM, THE SECRET OF THE SUN

Ages agone, when first his splendour rose
Upon the Gardener, father of mankind,
And Eva clasped him trembling, as the blind
Whose closed portals suddenly unclose,
Gazed they and joyance in their hearts arose.
While the first morning dawned upon the mind,
Ages agone men knew his path assigned;
Yet when he veiled his face their courage froze,
But yesterday men spake of how the fire,
Which ever rageth round his golden heart,
Must some day cease, like to an earthly pyre;
To-day we guess the secret of his art,
As radiant on their way his steeds depart,
Winged and immortal as the soul's desire.

PHILOSOPHY

FAIN would I climb, ere I go down to death,
Where Plato came and Kant and Hegel were,
And now the wise hold converse, but the air
Is tenuous for one of mortal breath;
None may endure for any shibboleth,
The chemist's lamp grows dim upon the stair,
Apollo's lyre would make but discord there;
No virtuous deed avails, nor any faith.

It is a lofty, ever sunlit hall,
Above the clouds, above the mortal fray,
Voyaging with the sun and free to all,
But very few they be that win their way.
Ah! Icarus, how often doomed to fall—
Yet those sail on serene from day to day!

ITALY THE ENCHANTRESS

Italy! Italy! England how clear she cries,
" Come o'er the Alps again, come o'er the snow,
Dance through the vintage of France with the dear free eyes,
Dance with the Nymphs of the Seine as you go!"

Italy! Italy! why should I cling to thee,
Thou that hast worshippers better a score,
Poets and painters and lovers to bring to thee
Passionate kisses and memories of yore?

Italy! Italy! I too, I love thee well,
I that have scarce touched thy cheek with my lips,
Scarce seen the sun kiss thy turreted citadel,
Scarce seen thy smile set the world in eclipse.

Italy! Italy! I too was made for thee,
Changed at my birth for some child of the mist;
I walked afar while he laughed and he played to thee
Music on lutes that my fathers had kissed.

Now at this last I have found and I cleave to thee,
Land that my footsteps have trodden so late,
Well will it be if my passing may leave to thee
One northern pearl for the crown of thy state.

OFF NAPLES

We are sailing in a classic sea,
Where once Ulysses sailed;
Behold above us Mercury
And Aphrodite veiled.
"Strange isles be these!" dost thou not know
These be the isles where sang
The Syrens in the long ago?
How faint their singing rang
Upon the ears of the King!—
For he was very wise—
He did not hear the Syrens sing,
Or heard them with his eyes.
He was tied fast unto the mast,
And wool was in his ears:
He saw them as his ship sailed past—
And blessed the pretty dears!

THE LOVER'S LAMENT

(FROM THE ARABIC)

O FRIEND, draw nigh and hearken to my sorrow,
To the sorrow of the brother of thy tribe!
And listening, ask thyself how 'tis I carry
Such a sorrow as would lay ten strong men low.
Young was I, the youngest of his children,
Fair as whelps of desert lion were they all.
When my cheek with down of manhood first was dusky,
My father gave me manhood's treasures three:
A carbine and a fiery steed to bear me,
And the third of manhood's treasures gave he me:
A bride of forehead pure and eyes of night.
Her name alone was called as to bring blessing
On our tent—our country's ancient name was hers—
Saïda, pearl of all the Razan's daughters.
But upon the page of destiny was written:
He shall never know but sorrow here below.
There came an hour whereon I had not counted,
The passing of the Angel of the Night,

When his wing-tip touched Saïda's forehead.
As a woman's was my weeping for Saïda,
Three days long and three long nights I wept her.
Then my blood boiled as the vintage of the palm tree,
And I felt its fire that burned into my heart.
I wandered forth alone into the desert,
Seeking but for him would slay me and my pain.
Now at last, behold, now I have sold me,
Weary, weary of my misery and life,
I have sold me to the service of the Christian,
And my sorrow I have swathed in cloak of red.
Now I know not who is born or who shall perish,
Far away beneath the spreading of my tent.
Of a certainty the women-folk have wept me
As a man that hath gone down among the dead ;
Upon me is now my father's malediction,
And my brethren have denied our brotherhood.
But I will not turn again my footsteps homeward :
We are faring to the country of the South,
To the country of the vulture and the jackal :
These will know when I have fallen in the sand.
Tell me, tell me, who there is will lave my body ?
Who will weep upon the orphan-soldier's tomb ?
Who will know that as a dove in hands of maidens
All a-tremble were the pulses of my heart ?
Tell me this, for I am faring to the desert.

"OLD LOVES OF OLD TIMES"

(FROM THE JAPANESE)

In the land of Katsushika
  Dwelt a maiden willow-graceful;
As the seaweed sways in ocean
  Was her grace in every motion.

Magic was the maiden's beauty—
  From afar men came to woo her;
One there was that filled her fancy,
  One alone of all that knew her.

Ofttimes bent the maid to gather
  (White her hand as water-lily)
Drifting sea-spoil in clear waters—
  Fairest of all sun-kissed daughters.

. . . . . .

Still the sea-wrack sways and passes
  In Katsushika's clear waters;
O'er her tomb hath twined the maki,
  O'er the fairest of Earth's daughters.

. . . . . .

Long as pine tree knows the breezes
Will the tale of all her sorrow,
Piteous tale of brave heart broken,
Dwell within my heart—unspoken.

JAPONICÈ

I

THE snow falleth ever
  On tall Mikanè—
At every bend
  Of the winding pathway,
A snow-white feather.

II

The sun shineth ever
  On fair Yoshinè—
On every leaf
  Of the glittering forest,
'Tis sunny weather.

III

My thoughts dwell ever
  With thee, my dearest.

TEUTONICÈ

WHEN you seek my grave
At the vesper's hour,
You will find it brave
With many a flower.
Do thou thy dark locks adorn
With the blossoms that are born
From my heart—
Those songs I thought, but ne'er writ down,
Those words of love that did in passion drown,
Ere my lips could part.

THEN AND NOW

I saw thee then as now,
Imperial neck and brow,
Eyes lakes of loveliness,
Gaze upward on my face.
Without, the fog lay heavy ;
Within, the room grew dim ;
Yet where thou wast was really
Eternal spring for him.
No change has thy face known,
Though we be elder grown ;
No change—thine eyes and brow
As clear I see them now
Gaze up on me as when,
With love in every vein,
I worshipped and wondered—
It thundered—
The lightning strook me—
Life took thee.

THE OLD HOME

I CANNOT dwell at ease here—
  The ghosts flit to and fro—
They creep into my fancy,
  The ghosts of long ago.

It is not that I fear them—
  Sweet, weary, wistful faces—
Why should I fear that love them
  Who haunt the ancient places ?

Sweet mother, rustling, rustling,
  With silver chatelaine,
I hear your keys a-jangle,
  I hear your voice quite plain.

My father standing yonder
  Yet broodeth o'er his tome—
I hardly like to whisper—
  He thinks I am from home.

There blows a gentle breeze now,
  It bears my gentle sister—

She was my fair confessor—
Ah! bitterly I missed her!

To-day she comes not lonely,
For Goldilocks is with her—
I remember when we lost her
All the world was like a nightmare.

And sister, loving sister,
Thinks yet on these old things;
She has searched the land of spirits,
And Goldilocks she brings.

I love them all too well here,
That flitter to and fro—
Too tenderly, too tenderly,
The ghosts of long ago.

RHODANTHE'S SONG

To thee, my dear, to thee my only love,
My heart flies forth on wings,
Then with the lark soars up to heaven above,
Soars up to heaven and sings.
On me, my love, on me no brown soft feathers
Spring Hermes-like on me,
Yet have I wings to cleave all worldly weathers,
The wings of poesy.
For thee, my love, for thee I have no golden
Shower covering Danae's bed;
As Phœbus, not as Zeus, I am beholden
For gift of thy bright head.
Thou that hast more in oval face upturning
Carven for my kiss alone,
In eyes and lips with lovely longings yearning,
Than Cypris on her throne,
Remember, O remember, my Rhodanthe,
When I am oversea,
Those be my songs that in the zephyrs fan thee,—
My heart I leave with thee.

THE STAR

You move upon the earth as one
New lit from off the car
That God Apollo guides, the Sun—
And in your hand, a Star;
For in your perfect form unite
Divided hemispheres,
The joy of day, the bliss of night—
Sun raptures, moonlit tears.
These words of love, I tell them o'er,
As monk his rosary—
We know the visions we adore
Are bright Reality.

THOUGHTS

From the French of Amiel.

EVERY thought is a bloom
That buds in our gloom,
That buds and is bright
In the mirk of our night,
That appears and is gone
Like a dream at the dawn.
Whence comes she ? None knows :
Who can tell where she goes ?

Ah ! quick, let us treasure
This giver of pleasure,
Let us kiss and caress
This fair enchantress,
Fix her colour and shape,
Ere yet she escape !
Every thought is a bloom
That shines in our gloom.

THE MAGIC WORD

Would you win your young love's heart ?
  Whisper just a little word
At the moment you must part ;
  But the right word it must be,
Not from others overheard,
  Made for her alone by thee,
Minted in love's treasury ;
  Whisper low that little word !

She will listen, she will know
  Copper coin from ruddy gold,
Though the August moon sinks low,
  And the mist creeps o'er the wold.
Therefore find the magic word,
  Love will help you, sir, to find it,
Fresh from every lover heard,
  Spring before and spring behind it !

WHICH IS THE DREAM ?

(FOR B. V.)

Am I a butterfly
  Vermeil and golden ?—
In rose's heart I lie
  Petal enfolden.
Blow, summer breezes, blow !
  Wide, meadow, wide !
Lo, I seek to and fro
  Butterfly bride.

Am I a man once more
  This chill December ?
Butterfly's dream before
  Seem to remember ?—
Or are life's joys and woes
  Dreams as I sway,
Deep in the mystic rose
  Waiting for day ?

INSPIRATION

WHEREFORE seek out the soil whence flamed the
rose,
Which on love's bosom glows,
Or strive to know what streamlets fed the tides
Whereon a navy rides ?

To-day the sun is veiled in clouds of sorrow ;
But if he shine to-morrow,
With him ye will forget and put away
The clouds of yesterday.

So with the poet—if his song ring true,
Ye shall give him his due,
Nor probe the hidden caverns of his heart,
Wherefrom the sweet songs start.

NOCTURNE

I WALK upon the waves to-night,
The pathway of the moon
Leads straight unto the halls of light,
I shall be with thee soon :
And thou, my darling, open wide
Thy window on the sea ;
Behold the stars a-thousand-eyed—
I gaze with them on thee.

Hark to the rustling wind among
The shadows of the grove ;
It is my voice in ancient song
Of immemorial love.
And now its murmurs die away,
And calm the sleeping world ;
Do thou sleep too, yet keep till day
This on thy bosom furled.

SILHOUETTE

One night we were silent together,
I and my slim Silhouette,
Out of reach of the wild world weather,
In the kingdom of Forget.
She whispered, Come paint me her beauty
That shall conquer your innermost soul,
For I know that the leashes of duty
Make me less than a part of the whole.
I made answer, Her eyes must be changing,
Blue and green, like the deeps of the sea,
Whereunder mermaidens are ranging
Off the shores of Normandy;
Let the tresses that follow her fleeting
Gleam gold as the shafts of the light
That Apollo triumphant is speeding,
As he drives off the shades of the night.
Let her limbs be as white alabaster,
Let the body that I would embrace
Shimmer through the thin draperies that clasp her
In the delicate foam of her lace.
I would feel as she quietly passes,

That she is not a queen—by choice—
Can look as she will in all glasses,
Could speak with the angel's voice;
And Ah! above all to be certain
That so she will not be long—
Quite soon she will lower the curtain,
Quite suddenly cease her song.
Thus my fantasy ended its flighting
And I gazed through your eyes on your soul,
Where I found I had merely been citing,
Silhouette, the least charm of the whole!

THE WISH

Oh! let me not be buried deep
Beneath the mould;
Oh! let me sleep out my last sleep,
Tinged with the gold.
Of sun and moon and galaxy,
The heaven's flambeaux;
With all that lives escorting me,
Thus would I go.

LITTLE LADY POEMS

PITTER PATTER

Pitter Patter, Rainy Rose!
Dewdrops glitter on your clothes,
Stars of dew upon your hair,
Stars and dewdrops everywhere

Round the little Rainy Rose,
Sweetest flower or child that grows.
Laughing eyes and lips of glee:
Sweet white Rosebud, dance with me?

"Dance with you, of course I will,
I will dance with you until
All the other little girls
Toss their jealous golden curls,

For you are grown up and tall,
Nice to dance with at a ball—
Let us fly around once more
On the smooth and slippery floor.

Pitter Patter, Rainy Rose!
Here's a secret no one knows:
Childhood's joy from you I borrow,
I will be grown-up to-morrow.

Sad good-night, sweet Rainy Rose!
Sunset on your dewdrops glows,
But I see life's morning rise,
Dancing in your dancing eyes!

THE PERFECT PHYLLISTINE

" You care no more for games or sport,
For art, or books, or wine ;
Dear friend—you have become in short
A perfect Philistine."

" True, I seek not the tennis-court,
No more ply rod and line ;
I never touch a gun—nor port—
I am, as you define,

Indifferent to art and books
And ' pleasures that refine '—
No critic's eye more coldly looks
On all these things than mine.

One thought within my heart I hold,
And rose and lily twine
And bind them with a thread of gold
For her that is divine.

Dear friend, behold! The truth I tell,
Your joys no more are mine;
I'm as you say, but as I spell—
A perfect Phyllistine."

TO A WHITE VIOLET

(FOR V. O.)

White Violet of violets,
Purple and blue,
That Naples on her forehead sets,
I think of you,
So blond amid the many dark,
So slim, so trim—
Demureness often drops the spark
That burns up *him !*
And do you sing the lays you sung,
Those songs of France,
That while my eyes to your lips clung,
Called for a dance,
And lit the ball-room in my brain,
And bade the guest
Whom in the throng of memory's train
I love the best ?
And have you laughed and have you hit
The tennis ball,
And volleyed hearts, nor cared a bit
Whose side they fall ?

Ah ! well I know that if I played—
Toss who'll begin !
'Twere thus our score would be displayed :
" Love one—you win ! "
White Violet of violets
Purple and blue
That Naples on her forehead sets :
Adieu ! Adieu !

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

(Miss Maidie Andrews as Alice at the New Theatre)

ALICE in Wonderland,
Dear little lady!
Look and you'll understand
Why we love Maidie.
Blue eyes and brown hair,
Caroll's true Alice,
Who would not crown her
To bear the chalice,
Wherein the dreamer
Poured his quaint fancy?
Haste ye to see her—
Maidie'll entrance ye.
Tea with the March hare,
Mad as the Hatter—
I would far rather
Pop in the latter,
Than the dear Dormouse
Dosing unheeding,
Through the enormous
Lengthy proceeding.

Down with the Duchess
  Careless and cruel!
Wrench from her clutches
  Maidie, our jewel!
Nay, let her linger
  Long as she will—
No fairy finger
  Will work her ill.
Shadowland, dreamland,
  Better than true,
Ask but of Maidie,
  She'll show it you.
Alice in Wonderland,
  Sweet little lady!
Look and you'll understand
  Why we love Maidie!

FOR MARJORIE STEWART

WRITE in thy book for thee ?
How shall I worthily
Write in thy book for thee,
Brown-eyed, bright Marjorie ?

Shall I dip pen in sea,
Steal from the clouds for thee,
Blazon thy pedigree,
Sweet cousin Marjorie ?

See how the ancient tree
Spreads its new greenery ;
Fairest, last leaf, I see
True Stewart Marjorie.

Come, drink a toast with me,
Drink " Love and Loyalty."
Drink, as ye bend the knee,
" Jacobite Marjorie " !

May all thy years to be
Chime as a harmony,

Whereof the melody
Comes from fair Marjorie.

Thus on one rhyme for thee
Rhyme I unvaryingly,
Since in the world can be
Only one Marjorie.

WITH A SPOON OF TRANSLUCENT ENAMEL

Hold thou me up against the light,
  If thou wouldst judge my beauty,
For then the sun and I unite—
  He helps me do my duty.
I treasure all the rainbow's lights,
  Yet have I none that vies
With those divine black diamond nights
  That are Rhodanthe's eyes.
Your necks, ye proudest swans that float,
  Curve not nor shine as hers—
A neck it is whereon to dote—
  I do so in this verse.
I cannot see her breast of snow,
  Soft as the eider's down,
Nor watch her limbs' harmonious flow
  Beneath her vaporous gown.
Though you close me in my case once more,
  Yet open very soon,
O mistress mine that I adore,
  For I am but a spoon.

ŒNONE

ŒNONE of the elfin locks !
You ask me for a little song
That shall be yours and yours alone.
'Tis done ! Though mortals claim to own
Your name—and claiming it do wrong—
Their frocks and faces both are long,
Œnone of the briefer frocks !

Œnone of the elfin locks !
Fear not at all lest anyone
Should so misread me as to dream
Of Paris—since you dwell in London—
Eyes blue as yours could never seem
Œnone's of Mount Ida's rocks !

Œnone of the elfin locks !
Right sure am I that never pen
Hath writ a name, nor gods nor men
Beheld a face so fair as yours,
All rose and music, that allures,
Œnone, hearts to sudden shocks.

Œnone of the elfin locks !
Œnone, name that I adore,
If I do speak your name once more,
Ever as a spell 'twill rule my heart.
Lo ! now I swear I will depart—
Œnone ! Elfin prison locks !

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

At Oxford on a leafy day in June,
Beneath the elms I trod the college walk
Past Keble, as the College clock struck noon.
With me was one who turned our common talk
To fairy waterfall of changing hue,
Lit with the radiance of his dazzling mind,
Wherefrom the old came ever forth the new ;
Ah ! kind to others, to thyself unkind,
Most true to friendship, to thyself untrue :
The sun gives light to all, the sun himself is blind.

He was above the common stature large,
His head, a Roman emperor's, heavy crowned
With hyacinthine curls, the forehead's marge
Set above eyes, like agates that are found
Full of the secrets of the sea, strange lights
Would shine in them, when from the teeming brain
Came the retort, like lightning-flash that smites
The ignorant, the foolish, and the vain.
Yea, from his lips flew wit in arrowy flights,
And laughing wisdom dwelt, whose like I never
met again.

Novalis somewhere tells of how the bard
Turns all he touches into fairy story ;
If this be true, my friend should be enstarred
As sharer with old Homer of his glory ;
For unto him was all adventure dear,
Furnishing forth good matter for his theme,
Whether he told of how to bear him here
He had procured a hansom-cab of dream,
Winged like a falcon, or for youth did rear
The crystal bridge of art athwart life's turbid stream.

Well I remember as we fared came one
Slowly beneath the elms, with weary look ;
His face was like old ivory where shone
Small sapphire eyes, he bore a parchment book
Beneath his arm, he walked deliberately,
Seeking the shade, not letting rove his gaze,
And doubtless would have passed us most sedately,
But my companion cried aloud : ' We praise
Even now the work that you have given us lately " ;
And Marius smiled on us, recovering from amaze.

That day they told of one to whom the right
Pertained to make a strange new world take shape,
Limned cunningly in black upon the white ;

Yet did the fates his cot in sable drape,
And with a mortal sickness strike him down,
Ere he had yet fulfilled a tithe his course ;
Smooth auburn hair, most vivid eyes of brown,
Mercutio's brilliant sword-play and the force
To make a world, to captivate the town,
Yet him the fates spared not, but slew with no remorse.

They talked, I harkened, as the legends tell
Of that young shepherd, who, to find a sheep,
Strayed on Olympus, upward clomb, until
He came, with many wanderings hard and steep,
Where in a circle of the antique mount,
Nigh to the summit, overarched with rocks,
He chanced upon a company renowned ;
A bearded King, with curled ambrosial locks,
Upon a throne of basalt, and around
Those others sat, or stood, or leaned upon great blocks

Rough-hewn of basalt : one a trident bore,
His flowing robes part azure, party green,
Upon his neck a crown of pearls he wore,
Blue were his eyes and cruel and serene.
Nigh him was one, her eyes alive with laughter,
Nude save that round her whiteness was a zone,
A dove upon her shoulder, and to waft her

Their fragrance, where she stood had roses
blown;
A King stood nigh, whose looks did follow after
Her wayward gaze, just then before her thrown

Upon a youth, fair, slim, his shoulders bearing
Long wings that folded well nigh touched the
ground,
He of some journey spake; the shepherd
staring,
Drank deep and long of that delicious sound.
For now he knew those were the gods conversing
Upon their ancient mountain-top divine,
The secrets of the time to be rehearsing,
Making the ancient mysteries to shine;
Life, as they spake the bonds of death was
bursting;
He felt that he too came of their immortal line.

But of a sudden one arose, a Queen,
Broad-browed and eyes of gray, a mighty owl
Was on the rock above her; "Well I ween,"
Quoth she, "that here some mortal man doth
prowl,"
And where the shepherd lay she glanced austere.
Thereat arose a rumour and the spy
Had fain fled speedily, but "Bring him near,"
Came from the throne, and ere he even could cry

A wind became his furious charioteer
And urged him forward, certain now to die.

And verily had Jove his right arm raised
To strike him to the earth, a hapless wight;
When Venus, whom his guileless lips had praised
Erewhile on rustic flute, right quickly cried:
"Spare him, O Thunderer, to pleasure me;
His life, a nothing, that is all I ask,
And lest he blab, do thou send Mercury
To Lethe for a draught, an easy task."
Jove nodded, smiled the Irresistible,
The shepherd drained the oblivion-giving flask.

He waked and found himself a-lying where
At noon-tide he had lain beneath the oak,
But when again he would repeat the rare
And wondrous vision, gone was all like smoke.
So as a youth I harkened to the speech
Of godlike men and thought to grasp the whole,
And give where I had taken unto each;
But the veil falls, and on this parchment scroll
These rhymes in pious memory I pleach,
That on Olympus stood and heard Olympian
thunder roll.

NOTE

For many years I had in mind *Mirage* as a good title, but Mr Temple Thurston was first in the field, and I have now to thank him for kindly permitting me to use it on the present occasion. The disyllabic danger signal following the title will doubtless warn readers of fiction to seek their verdant pastures elsewhere.

Most of the preceding poems have not previously been published, but *Calypso* was first seen in Mr Murray's *Monthly Review*, *Sapphics* in the *Fortnightly*; *Good Friday's Hoopoe* was first published in the *Dublin Review*, and a few of the lyrics have already appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Glasgow Herald*, and the *Evening Standard*.

A Friend in Need has been suggested by Mr Edgar Prestage's admirable prose version of Eça de Queiros's *Defunto*, and I am much indebted to him for permission to make full use of his translation.

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"Mr Balfour in his recent Romanes Lecture mentioned with respect the work on æsthetic of the Italian philosopher, Signor Croce, as giving more practical guidance to the inquirer than the ordinary absolutist æsthetics. The translation which Mr Douglas Ainslie has given us of Croce's chief work comes opportunely when our doubts have been stirred by Mr Balfour's scepticism. Mr Ainslie translates the whole of the *Theory of Æsthetic*, and in a very useful 'Historical Summary' gives a synopsis of the historical portion of the original. The translator is an enthusiast for his subject, as is evident from the introduction, but on the whole we do not think he makes extravagant claims for Croce. This *Æsthetic* is really a most remarkable performance, and an English translation is a real boon."—*Spectator.*

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